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"SELF" IN POETIC NARRATIVES: A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE LONG POEMS IN TAIWAN AS EXEMPLIFIED BY WORKS OF LUO FU, LUO MEN, CHEN KEHUA, AND FENG QING

By

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Abstract

This dissertation discusses an important but neglected aspect of contemporary Chinese Poetry in Taiwan: the figuration of "self" in poetic narratives. Identity, subjectivity, and estrangement are the central concerns. Instead of rendering precise what the self is, this dissertation investigates how the self is constituted through the poet's narration. This should yield a view of the self that interacts with the sociopolitical circumstances of the island in the period from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. During this period, two of the most provocative issues have gained increasing notice: the status of Taiwan in relation to Mainland China and the emergence of the feminine against patriarchal convention. This thesis underlines, hence, the need to probe the aspect of identity in an era marked with the attributes of "polyphony," "multivoicedness" and "plurality."

In this regard, Anthony Paul Kerby's elucidation of the dialectic between "narrative and the self" is taken as a framework for the investigation. His claim that the self is "a social and linguistic construct, a nexus of meaning rather than an unchanging entity" is observed throughout this dissertation. Interrelated with this observation is a focus on the implied poet's stance, the speaker's perspective, the narrating voice, and the shifting position of the self. Together, the four elements are analyzed for the discussion of the central concerns.

Four Chinese poems published in the period are discussed in detail:

Luo Fu's "The Non-Political Totem," Luo Men's "Time and Space Sonata," Chen Kehua's "Portrait of Ladies," and Feng Qing's "The Actress." Examples from some 20th century Anglo-American poems are drawn upon to illustrate the various constructions of the self as they relate to the poems analyzed. By dealing with these poems, the present study is intended to launch, hopefully, a substantial scholarly treatment of the poetic narratives. An approach like this may provide impacts on the way the self is constituted in contemporary Chinese poetry that negotiates the sociopolitical climate of Taiwan.

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Introduction

I

This dissertation is a study of the self that is constructed in the contemporary Chinese long poem in Taiwan. Identity, subjectivity, and estrangement from social and/or communicative bounds are the central issues. Brought together, the issues are examined with respect to the unfolding of a problematic self in a turbulent context. Rather than organized to define what the self is in a precise manner,[1] this dissertation investigates how the self is constituted through the poet's narration. The investigation should yield a view of the self that interacts with the sociopolitical circumstances of the island in the period from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. In this regard, Anthony Paul Kerby's elucidation of the dialectic between "narrative and the self" helps to provide the framework for the investigation.[2] Following his lead, the implied poet's stance, the speaker's perspective, and the speaking voice are analyzed to relate these issues and narration.

To exemplify the contemporary poet's constitution of the self, four poems published in the period by four poets—Luo Fu (洛夫, 1928-), Luo Men (羅門, 1928-), Chen Kehua (陳克華, 1961-), and Feng Qing (馮青, 1950-)—are discussed in the following chapters.[3] Examples from some twentieth-century Anglo-American poems are also drawn upon to elaborate the selves in the poetic narratives. Thus, Luo Fu's "The Non-Political Totem—Visiting Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Late Residence" is interpreted with a view to Robert Lowell's (1917-1977) "For the Union Dead" and Robert Penn Warren's (1905-1989) "A Way to Love God." Luo Men's "Time and Space Sonata—Viewing Canton-Kowloon Railway from a Distance" is compared with Elizabeth Bishop's (1911-1979) "Over 2,000 Illustrations and a Complete Concordance" and "Questions of Travel." Chen Kehua's "Portrait of Ladies" is read together with Ezra Pound's (1885-1972) "Portrait d'une Femme," William Carlos Williams's (1883-1963) "Portrait of a Lady," and also T. S. Eliot's (1888-1965) "Portrait of a Lady." Finally, Feng Qing's "The Actress" is juxtaposed with Anne Sexton's (1928-1975) "The Play." Arranged in this way, this dissertation aims to place particular importance on the role of narration to the very constitution of the self.

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[1] It would be a dubious undertaking to offer a definition of a "true" self since the self is believed here to be constructed through narration, a work of interpretative creation.

[2] *Narrative and the Self* is the title of Kerby's book that will be referred to throughout this dissertation.

II

According to Kerby, the self has already been acted upon by the other's narrative: "we have already been narrated from a third-person perspective prior to our even gaining the competence for self-narration" (6). The self cannot but confront itself with a horizon of expectations, or rather, constraints. Related to the explicit or conscious narrative, the drama of this social existence in which the self is situated is the prenarrative in Kerby's word.[4] The narrative "generally relates back, directly or indirectly" (39) to the prenarrative. Thus, the self remains "inseparable from the narrative . . . it constructs for itself or otherwise inherits" (4).

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[3] The four poems are published in 1990, 1988, 1987, and 1989, respectively.

The self has to and, indeed, must exist in and with the prenarrative. The prenarrative, Kerby emphasizes, "can and does serve as a corrective or guide for the act of narration" (42). To narrate the self, therefore, is to draw out the prenarrative it cannot but embody. Similarly, to make explicit the prenarrative is to give shape to the self. While proposing "a configuration that serves to organize worldly events into meaningful sequences and purposes" (Kerby 43), the self is attending to something that exhibits itself according to its own perspective. This entails the related argument that narration is the constitutive process by which the prenarrative is conceptualized and the self inscribed. Hence, Kerby remarks: "it is in and through various forms of narrative emplotment that our lives—and thereby . . . our very selves—attain meaning" (4). Put briefly, narration ascribes significance to the self.

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[4] The term "prenarrative" is used synonymously with "semi-narrative" and "quasi-narrative" in Kerby. They denote Kerby's perception that "life is inherently of a narrative structure" (40).

Thus, the self is constructed. It is, to quote Kerby, "a social and linguistic construct, a nexus of meaning rather than an unchanging entity" (34). The notion of nexus implies that the self emerges to be what it is through the subject position it occupies in the narrative. It is constituted by what is cast back in its narration, by the interplay of the narrative and the prenarrative. There can be hence a plurality of positions, depending on the various stances, perspectives, and relations that the self is subject to. This variety is evident in the employment of personal pronouns, in the "dialogical unity of 'I' and 'you'" (Kerby 78), in particular.[5] Kerby comes to recognize therefore "identity in difference" (37).[6] The self is, in its formation and nature, different and changing, and at times, irreversibly transformed.

"In order to be," Kerby states, "we must be *as* something or someone, and this someone that we take ourselves to be is the character delineated in our personal narratives" (109). Caught up in a social drama, the self is constantly, out there, to interact with others, confront new situations, and establish new relationships. All of these cause shifts and discontinuities in self-identification. Since "narrative and the self" are interrelated, "the character delineated," furthermore, "embodies and exemplifies the norms (customs) by which people gain identity and that provides criteria of judgement for acts that occur within the society" (Kerby 59). Not contradictory, the self is rather dispersed among various roles to meet the norms (Kerby 104-105). Stated otherwise, narration characterizes the self and the prenarrative altogether. That "identity in difference," in the movement over the various roles, betrays the self's reception of, as well as its resistance to, the prenarrative.

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[5] This point of Kerby's derives from Emile Benveniste's explanation of personal pronouns in the act of utterance. See Kerby 68.

[6] It should be added here that some Chinese literary critics would also agree with the view. Zhou Yingxiong, for example, believes that "the individual is not an unchangeable entity. The so-called subjectivity is the process in which the individual reflects on itself in a society" (75).

The self *as* ultimately "a nexus of meaning" grows, indeed, out of Kerby's argument that respects the situating of the self in a sociolinguistic network. The self is generated through the act of narration, which involves "language usage and expression" (Kerby 110). Language, Kerby asserts, functions in the social realm (110). Expression, moreover, is affected by changing states of mind that vibrate under social structures. This occurs, however, only because the self is "an implicate of language usage" (Kerby 110). In the case of a written narrative, the self is thereby "the implied subject of a narrated history" (109).[7] This subject, again, is called forth by narration and, concomitantly, by the prenarrative.

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[7] This view is anticipated earlier in *Narrative and The Self* when Kerby writes: "I have sketched a view of the self where language takes center stage,

For Kerby, the social and the communicative dimensions are fundamentally intertwined. This dynamic is precisely what this dissertation attempts to underline in discussing subjectivity, identity, and estrangement. As with "identity in difference," subjectivity is, for the most part, defined against the various subject positions the self occupies in the narrative. Following Emile Benveniste, Kerby contends that "subjectivity is attained in discourse by assuming the role of 'I' in that discourse" (68). "I" is predicated by and interchangeable with "you." This "locutionary reality" (68) of "I" is illuminating. Like "I" in relation to "you," subjectivity is, first of all, too interdependent to claim any fixed site of ascription. Besides, subjectivity finds itself primarily in acts of self-narration in much the same way as "I" exists solely in the very saying of "I." As Kerby observes, subjectivity is "the possibility of signification, of expression, what might be called . . . a wanting and being able, in most cases, to say or express" (77). It "is manifest as the speaking embodied subject that seeks to carry over into expression the implicit truth of itself (its implicit history or story)" (Kerby 107). Put differently, subjectivity is confirmed when the speaking subject is able to define and give a character to its own identity.

III

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especially in the form of narration with its implied subject" (67).

Based on this understanding of Kerby, subjectivity is treated especially with a view to the forces that lie behind its constitution. Primary among these are representation and recollection. Kerby suggests that subjectivity is seldom manifest without counteraction. The speaking subject's "expressive potential" (Kerby 113) is very often restrained within sociolinguistic system and its norms. Such limitation is sustained through representation. As Claire Colebrook rightly argues, "power and value are nothing other than representation" (210). Representation can then be employed to legitimate norms.

Earlier in quoting Kerby, norms are said to endorse people's identity and value judgement. Representation, in this regard, can affect the speaking subject's "implicit truth of itself." In other words, the subject's potential is exercised upon certain possibilities inherent in the system. As previously noted, however, norms are disclosed by narration. Narration is able to appropriate and negotiate between conflicting interpretations of norms. Just as norms are interpreted and modified by this creative activity, representation, while impinging upon identity, is countered by the subject's expression. Subjectivity remains, hence, in tension with the dynamic character of representation. So conditioned, the very constitution of subjectivity involves an interchange between power and resistance.

Besides representation, recollection is also considered in this dissertation in regards to its impact on the "implicit truth." The speaking subject's "history or story" is composed of memory. Memory metonymically singles out some episode to stand for the whole event the subject has experienced. In the act of recollection, memory can thus animate a narrative of what has happened to the subject at a certain time. This disclosure structures the "truth" and links subjectivity with self-identity revealed in the narrative. The identity is built upon the "truth," in which a more or less continuous and contiguous reality is recognized. Whereas subjectivity rides on its "expressive potential," identity rides on the actualized expression. What is at work to inscribe the "truth" does the same to subjectivity and identity. To make this connection, the dissertation turns to the revelatory nature of recollection.

Several characteristics central to this revelatory nature are therefore explored. Among the most important are the temporal and spatial borders that separate the recalling mind from what is recalled. The act of recollection at this moment is temporally distinct from the time that is remembered. This fact leaves a gap for narration to fill in. Because the past is remembered from a present standpoint, it is narrated so as to call forth whatever underlies the perspective. Recalling, as it were, contains a narrative emplotment of the recalled with which the self and the prenarrative are entangled. In the first place, recollection is triggered by the social drama that prompts "a wanting to say, to be, to do" (Kerby 107) something otherwise or again. Hope, doubt, desire, or despair—any emotion in accord with the past experience—is betrayed. The recalled is therefore tinged with the subject's "history" of struggles through power and resistance in the prenarrative. In recollection, moreover, there is a movement of border crossing, by which this "I" now is carried away to that "I" then. The two meet and depart, mostly with a new face figured by reverberations, associations, and comparisons between each other. In this view, recollection invites not just retrieval but also resituating of the self in the prenarrative.

This outcome is significant. It stresses a gradual revision of the "truth" over the act of remembering and the resultant appropriation of self-identity and subjectivity. Their correlation opens a way to approach estrangement. That is, estrangement in this dissertation is defined against the constitution of subjectivity and identity. The more the self's "wanting" to express the "truth" of itself is sanctioned and incorporated into representational complex, the more undisrupted its operation of subjectivity is. Estrangement arises when the operation is repressed, deprived, or denied. This happens in the case of imposed displacement. In patriarchal portraits of femininity, for example, the portrayed woman is very often forced to disassociate herself from the position of a speaking subject. Her "truth" cannot be narrated without the interference of masculine "subjectivity." Another instance that is examined in this dissertation is the self's confrontation with contesting narratives of a national history. Each of the narratives is politically represented to be legitimate and indisputable. The self's nationality is seriously challenged by this disparity. To consolidate its nationality, the self is obliged to identify itself with one of the contesting narratives and, as a result, banished by the other narrative.

The subject in terms of social relationships is also studied. Here, estrangement is taken as external or internal severance from any community. The external exclusion stands in conjunction with the internal isolation. What decides the "true" self is critical to the twofold severance. Self-identity is recognized in the "normal" community of others mostly after it rests on conventional social roles. Estrangement, in this view, results from a failure or a rejection to accustom the self to the dominant social norms. In exile, nostalgia for the homeland can be so intense as to impede a promising contact with the foreign land. Likewise, "remembrance of things past" may generate a risk of falling into self-inflicted isolation. In a case like this, the self is alienated from, and divided within, itself. It is unable to integrate its inner community of subject positions into a coherent narrative. When an internal story of self-identity becomes disoriented, estrangement arises.

IV

It is obvious, therefore, that the dialectic of "narrative and the self" underlines the discussion of identity, subjectivity, and estrangement. These issues are approached with a view to history, exile, patriarchy, and femininity. So arranged, the discussion delves actually into political and sexual domains on account of Taiwan's sociopolitical circumstances in the late 80s.

The period demands an interrogation of a problematic self in "the isle full of noises."[8]Many critics in Taiwan have employed such attributes as "polyphony," "multivoicedness," and "plurality" to distinguish the period from the preceding ones.[9] During this period, Taiwan has gone through a transition to an era that is marked by a subversion of "continuity and homogeneity" (Chang Yvonne 1) in the sociopolitical field.[10] Some vital changes are critical to the subversion. On July 15, 1987, the *Emergency Decree* that had lasted for forty years was lifted.[11] On Sep. 28, an opposition party, Democratic Progressive Party, or DPP, was founded. Since Nov. 2 of the same year, moreover, Taiwan citizens have been officially allowed to visit their relatives on the Mainland. On the first day of January, 1988, registration for new newspapers started. At last, "the myth of an authoritarian government" (Xu Wangyun 576) was gradually put to rest with the death of President Jiang Jingguo on Jan. 13.

These changes have finally ushered Taiwan into apparent

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[8] This echoes the title of Zhang Cuo's *The Isle Full of Noises: Modern Chinese Poetry from Taiwan.*

[9] Lin Yaode, Meng Fan, Ye Weilian, and Zhang Cuo, for example, are on the list.

[10] For a detailed description of this era, see Ge Yongguang's *The Story of Taiwan: Politics.*

[11] Another common name for the decree is "Martial Law."

"emancipation" (Wang Haowei 556).[12] Thus, after a long history of resisting colonialism and authoritarian rule,[13] Taiwan has found herself, once again, engaged in resistance not so much prompted by a dominant oligarchy as by its very collapsing. More and more people begin to defy suppression of cultural differences, imposed projection of subjectivity, and above all, leveling appropriation of identity. What were privately discussed are now debated in public. One of the most magnified issues is the status of Taiwan in relation to Mainland China. The controversy about "one-China Principle"[14] has swept across political, economic, historical and cultural spheres. Intersecting with this attention to the cross-strait ties is that of the specific reality of the island itself. Besides the collective destiny of Taiwan, people are interested in the reality that has a direct effect on their identity. Attention has moved beyond the debate over national unification or independence to focus, ultimately, on the innermost quest for individual authenticity.

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[12] For Wang Haowei, however, this social "emancipation" turned out to be an illusion and prompted the writers in the 90s to explore their inner beings.

[13] The history of resistance refers to the fifty-year rule by Japan and the autocracy of the KMT (Kuomintang, or, Nationalist Party) government. The former lasted from 1895 to 1945 and the latter from 1947, two years before the government retreated from the Mainland to Taiwan, until 2000 when DPP became the governing party.

[14] On the Mainland's side, it is indeed a principle. Any claim other than this is unacceptable and regarded as treason against the unification of China. On the side of Taiwan, however, this "principle" of the Mainland is treated as one of the main issues for cross-strait dialogue rather than as a premise that excludes any other views of "one-China."

People are more anxious than before to know "who s/he is," "what her/his relationship with others is," "what her/his position is in the society," and "how much s/he understands her/himself" (Zhou 99-100). One way to find the answers to these questions is to return to the site where "dominant boundaries of identity" (Gaard 236) are first drawn. And that, to be sure, is sexuality.[15] As the public begins to develop a more receptive attitude, different outlooks on sexuality are explored.[16] Sexuality in terms of the social roles of women and men, female and male bodies, as well as feminine and masculine attributes is attaining increasing notice.

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[15] Another site, according to Greta Gaard, is nationalism. This is also studied in the following chapters that refer to the relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland.

[16] In Taiwan, the social movement for women's rights started in the early 70s. Not until the 80s, however, did associated organizations appear. The study of sexuality was carried on after the mid-80s when research institutes on this subject were founded. Two of the most prominent institutes were the Women Research Office in the Research Center of Population at National Taiwan University founded in 1985 and the Institute of Sexuality and Social Research at National Tsing Hua University founded in 1988 (Meng Fan, *Poetic Theory* 287).

This approach to sexuality becomes all the more important when "the relaxation of moral standards" (Chang Yvonne 178) is found specifically in sexual misconduct. Though "the new social affluence" (Chang Yvonne 178) in the late 80s encourages the quest for individual authenticity, it also helps accelerate sexual deviation that threatens the quest. To probe into such deviation, patriarchal assumptions of femininity, which are integral to both the problem and the solution, are being reexamined. Partly a political and partly a social output, sexuality has been emphasized as a crucial point not only to forward but also to consolidate the quest.

Indeed, the sociopolitical circumstances in the late 80s have drawn contemporary poets into arguments over their nationality and gendered identity. In fact, poetic currents in postwar Taiwan have significantly responded to the island's transitions. From the anticommunist propaganda in the postwar decade, through the modernist and nativist movements in the 1960s-1970s, to the increasing exposition of a market-oriented culture in the 1980s,[17] poetry published since the late

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[17] What is mentioned above is a very general summary of the development of modern Chinese poetry in Taiwan. Most of the poems written in the 1950s and 1960s were characteristic of dogma, intending to carry on the political mandate against communism. It was then severely challenged by

80s has developed "multifarious poetic contents and styles" (Zhang Cuo, "Continuity" 399) to respond to the era of "emancipation."[18] In a way, this development reveals the poets' attempts to reconstitute the self at the juncture of sociopolitical transformation. Responding also to the public's questioning, contemporary poems are imbued with unceasing and even irreconcilable inquiries into subjectivity and self-identity.

What does it mean to be a Taiwanese/Chinese on the island? Should Taiwanese cultural identity be independent of Chinese heritage or rely on it? How can the ambiguous relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China be constructively maintained? Is it possible to sustain

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another trend that welcomed Western modernism. Some of the poets who attempted to resist and, at the same time, to protect themselves from political persecution resorted to the independent and experimental role of poetry that was highlighted in modernism. They developed a highly obtuse language, which was later accused by the young poets in the 70s of solipsism and out of touch with a more realistic and locally oriented voice. The younger poets' eagerness to express their concern for the people living in Taiwan, however, was susceptible of utilizing poetry as an instrument for social correction. Finally, the time came when the whole poetic scene fell under the influence of Taiwan's becoming a developing country in the 1980s. For a more detailed description of the development, see Peng Ruijin's *Forty-Year Movement of Taiwan New Literature*.

[18] See note 13.

the sovereignty of Taiwan without causing confrontations between the two political states? On the one hand, some of the poems take on a subversive overtone to challenge traditional Chinese identity. This disapproval expresses an anxiety to undertake a worldwide recognition of the unique status of Taiwan. On the other hand, the task has, unwittingly, marginalized those who feel reluctant to identify themselves completely with either of Taiwanese and Chinese. Hence, there are other poems that treat especially, to borrow from M. G. Henderson, a "border subject" (5).

The "border subject" belongs in between. It suffers from the imposed rupture between the collective subject of the mainland culture and the individual subject displaced to the island. Images of this subject could often be found in the "poetry of homecoming" (Meng Fan, "Trend" 383), which has flourished since 1987, and also in the post-1949 "poetry of exile." A remarkable poem that falls into the former category is Luo Fu's "Totem." The first-generation mainland poet has been recognized for his ability to "suggest 'we' by 'I' and the infinite by the finite" (Xiao Xiao, "Unchangeable" 129).[19] Indeed, his "Totem" epitomizes the subject's reflection upon its twofold position—a Chinese Taiwanese. Placed in the cross-strait conflicts, the position betrays a complex that has inflicted many mainlanders. After settling in Taiwan for nearly forty years, they are still regarded as mainlanders.[20] Yet, when they finally return to their homeland as visitors, they are thought to be Taiwanese. "Totem" captures, hence, a border subject's dilemma of identification. Most importantly, the paradoxical culture shock for such a visitor is prepared by an allusion to the present status of Taiwan in relation to Mainland—"both internal and external, united and separated, same and different" (Liao, *Love and Deconstruction* 47).

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[19] Most Chinese critics designate the poets who followed the KMT government to relocate in Taiwan around 1949 as the first-generation mainland poets.

It is because of this suggestive power that "Totem" is singled out from the other poems. The latter's concern of the border subject ceases to go beyond the personal predicaments of the poets. Likewise, Luo Men's "Sonata" is chosen for his defining the subject against what gives rise to its border crossing. Written shortly before the civilian contact between the two political states resumed, "Sonata" is permeated with an agonistic sense of nostalgia. The juxtaposition between reality and memory discloses gradually a "trauma of exile in physical, spiritual, and linguistic transpositions" (Ye Weilian, "Misplacement" 11). In this regard, "Sonata" is very typical of the "poetry of exile." Giving expression to the exile's "bifocal vision" (Papastergiadis 16), however, "Sonata" distinguishes itself in several ways.

The urban present, in which the subject finds itself imprisoned, is evoked not only to contrast with an agricultural past but also to lay bare a reified city. Mediated by "remembrance of things past," the social reality of Taiwan becomes a site for an investigation that has bypassed her "citizens." The oscillating consciousness of 'here' and 'there,' moreover, is expanded to include that of the displacements in Korea and Germany. Thus, a cosmic tragedy of uprooting is projected. Finally, the subject's exile is described to precede its departure, while its wish for return is to rest, ultimately, not in a realistic motherland but in a literary portrait of nature. Seen in this light, "Sonata" implies the possibility of constituting identity upon cultural or historical China. This view is particularly significant in the early 1990s when the political forefront of "one China" began to predominate public debate.[21]

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[20] It should be noted that this is partly attributed to their intense nostalgia and consequent detachment from the social reality of Taiwan.

Compared with exile to a foreign land, estrangemet within one's homeland exposes more poignantly the gulf between identity and non-identity. This approach in "Sonata" is seldom seen in the other poems of exile and mostly ignored by critics. Precisely, the neglect makes the choice of "Sonata" all the more necessary. Besides the distinctions of the poem itself, this dissertation includes "Sonata" in order to anticipate two other poems by Chen Kehua and Feng Qing. To some extent, the two poems highlight mainly the self's isolation and its inner gulf in respect of identity.

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[21] "One China" was raised on April 1992 in the cross-strait dialogue in Singapore between Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) on behalf of Taiwan (the ROC government) and Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) on behalf of the Mainland (the PRC government).

Similar to poems referring to collective subjectivity, many poems on sexuality emphasize the self's difficulty in adapting itself to the social drama. This concern is frequently shown in a way that seems to cover it. That is, the embellished discourse on the enticement of sex serves to divulge the dark reality of carnal desire. Thus, sexual indulgence is shown to be spiritual death in disguise. The obsession with fragments of bodies points toward a wish for intact relationships. Aloofness, detachment, and total isolation, moreover, intimate a doomed hope for loving care. This kind of poems dwells, in fact, on multiple encoding and decoding of gendered identity. The new generation of poets,[22] in particular, has explored this subject matter and contributed to its becoming one of the major poetic trends.

Among these poets, Chen Kehua is noted for his "bold erotic language" (Meng Fan, "Trend" 385).[23] The way he uses it to construct the feminine "is completely different from the reserved and indirect way adopted by the preceding generation of poets" (Meng Fan, "Trend" 385). Chen's straightforward plunge into eroticism is quite representative of the new generation. “To display, in a raw way, the darkness of humanity before the public,” some of these poets “resort to the ‘necessity of obscenity’” (Chen Jianmin 488). The use of extreme, sensuous imagery diminishes the nuance of understatements. In other words, “the metaphorical or symbolical significance which the poets intend to present is reduced by the arousing imagery of flesh” (Chen Jianmin 488). Considering the resultant flaw in general, it is not surprising that Chen’s “Portrait” is included in this dissertation. In short, the poem reveals a subtle observation of femininity, which arrests the slip into mere obscenity.

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[22] For most of the critics in Taiwan, the poets of new generation are those who were born after 1949.

[23] Besides Meng Fan, Chen Jianmin, Jian Zhengzhen, and Lin Yaode, to mention a few, also point out this feature in Chen's poems.

Herein lies the main reason for discussing this poem. Chen’s account of urban sex delves deeply into the patriarchal construction of femininity. Besides a continuation of the urban motif that is raised in “Sonata,” “Portrait” provides a specific viewpoint on the feminine subject to patriarchal convention transforming power inherent in the very site of repression. Deliberately equating “the decline of poetry” (Lin Yaode, “Afterword” 783) with the decadence of female sexuality, Chen plays upon the feminine in its non-masculine and marginal sense. How the women in Taipei resist convention is complicated and elaborated by how the poet defies the decline through his narration. The “portrait of ladies” becomes, in the end, a poetic icon which turns “degeneration” into an optimum condition for ascending in power.

Apart from the conventional view of women, of their being "conservative," "naïve," "passive," "sly," and, sometimes, "adorable,"[24] the poem reveals the aspect of women that is taken to be threatening, rebellious, and uncontrollable. This is further stressed by the use of a perverted male observer, who is anxious about the changing images of women. Through the observer's "pride and prejudice," the poet demonstrates the confining effect of patriarchal assumptions on men's perception. What is almost untouched by the other male poets, therefore, can be found in Chen's poem. His "portrait" displays an antipatriarchal position based on a stance that shifts between the observer and the observed. Stated otherwise, the gendered identity, of both men and women alike, is implicated by and in need of liberation from patriarchy. Because of this discovery, "Portrait" deserves a chapter.

Contrary to "Portrait," Feng Qing's "The Actress" studies feminist themes specifically from a female perspective. The poem is, first of all, chosen to be a counterpart of the female resistance against gender bondage in "Portrait." And bondage, indeed, is one of the noteworthy concerns in "The Actress." Centered on the making of femininity, the poem exposes arbitrary representation of women in the male-dominated cinematic industry. Through an actress' attempt to cross the boundary of fiction and reality, the poem expresses a woman's growing demand for performing a self-defined image. In a word, "The Actress" places a particular emphasis on female "struggle for subjectivity" (Li Yuanzhen, "Self-Perception" 24).

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[24] These adjectives are mostly employed by male poets to portray women. See Meng Fang's *Poetic Theory* 307-308.

The poems that address this struggle are not common when viewed from a tradition of "modern women poets' self-perception in Taiwan" (Li Yuanzhen, "Self-Perception" 24). As Li Yuanzhen rightly states, the women poets' representations of "self-identification and self-exploration" ("Self-Perception" 23) for the past forty-years, dating from the 1950s to the 1980s, have focused on the "embrace of love" and "endurance of maternity" ("Self-Perception" 23-24). Though expositions of the struggle are not totally absent in the tradition, the extent to which it is profoundly examined is far greater in "The Actress" than in the other poems.

Another distinction of the poem is its narration of the struggle. The poem is introduced by a sympathetic female narrator, who penetrates the actress' inner rumination of a male director's commands to her. The poem is concluded with the narrator's witness of her suicide from a distance. The superimposed viewpoints, of the actress, the director, and the narrator, correspond to the struggle through opposing appropriations of femininity. One appropriation aims at female independence while the other at the male suppression of it. Implied in the increasing distance between the female stances, moreover, is an awareness to reexamine the way the struggle is carried out. Why the struggle must end in fatality is the inquiry pursued by women themselves. In this regard, "The Actress" typifies the few poems that take a lead in the self-reflexive interrogation of the struggle.

To sum up, all four poems are imbued with a helpless sense of loss. They have in common an implied self best described as tragically estranged. The self that is constituted in "Totem" has to extricate itself from the conflicting narratives of Chinese Republican era—in the first, to withstand an apprehension of repeating aspiration and retrogression in history; in the second, to look forward to a time when nationality and self-identity are on congenial terms. In "Sonata," the self is exiled from a genuine world. Alienated by abrupt displacement, it is driven to the proliferation of memory that is peopled by phantoms of childhood, homeland, uprooting and landing. Ultimately, it is exiled again by its failing to identify itself with an urbanizing island to which it has immigrated. The absence of social belonging is carried on to "Portrait." The self continues to drift through a city of reification—sexually deviated and spiritually depraved. As if trapped in a frozen picture, the self is sophisticatedly aloof, detached, unresponsive, and realistically lonely. Its relationship is tied down by patriarchal constraints. The sense of estrangement underlines also the narrative of "The Actress." Driven to follow a patriarchal representation of femininity, the actress-like self escapes into a revised characterization of a woman in love and, eventually, into a termination of its gendered identity by committing suicide.

The self as gendered within patriarchy or as placed within specific historical circumstances is the figure the four poems construct. It is to illustrate the emplotment of the self in its estrangement that the American poems are drawn upon. There are other reasons for choosing these *American* poems. First, compared with other Western poems, American poems are more accessible and, hence, manageable. The popularity of American poems in Taiwan is mainly due to the histories of abrupt cultural vacancy and the military threats the island has to withstand. Before the *Emergency Decree* was lifted, most of the pre-1949 Chinese literary works had been banned. In a fear of Chinese communists' infiltration and subversion, most of the mainlanders' works were not permitted to circulate. Even the native literary works of Taiwan were suppressed by authoritarian domination. Under restricted circumstances, the people in Taiwan turned to Western sources for cultural inspiration. Among them, the American source played the most effective role.[25] Obviously, this prominent American presence is related to the conflicts between democracy and communism in the Cold War. The island was supported by the United States to counter the military intimidation of the communists, the Chinese one, in particular. American cultural products were assimilated to the socioeconomic and the educational systems without much difficulty. In fact, Anglo-

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[25] For a brief illustration of the background just mentioned, see Li Fengmao's "The Rise and Significance of New Poetic Societies," 311, Meng Fan's "Theory and Practice," 48, or Xi Mi's *Essays on Modern Chinese Poetry* 156.

American literature is still the most substantial part of the curriculum in most departments of foreign literatures. Likewise, the course that centers on American poetry, if not required, is available as an option.

Second, the choice of the American poems in this dissertation takes into consideration the crucial role of American modernism, especially the New Critics' aesthetic principles, in orienting the development of modern Chinese poetry in Taiwan. Because of authoritarian domination, the poets in Taiwan felt the need to search for a more unregulated creative space. The American critics' emphasis on artistic autonomy and the intrinsic value of literary works provided the poets with a release from political prescripts.[26] Some of Luo Fu's and Luo Men's poems, indeed, are structured to form an autonomous organic whole.

Third, these American poems are permeated with a certain "sense of uncertainty" that appears also in modern Chinese poetry in Taiwan. The uncertainty in the past was caused by the isolated status of the island and the authoritarian restrictions imposed on it. In the present, it is mainly caused by public debates on Taiwan's unification with or independence from China. Such external uncertainty has enhanced the internal one and prompted the poets in Taiwan to explore their inner realities.[27] Since the 50s, this twofold uncertainty has paved the way for the absorption of modern American aesthetics. Starting in the late 80s, moreover, the uncertainty has effected a revision of the introspected self.

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[26] See Chang Yvonne's "Introduction," 4-7 and Zhang Cuo's "Heritage of Lyric," 408.

The fourth reason for this choice, in fact, is underlined by the attempt to study the poets' revision of the self that appears commensurate with the transforming era. These American poems, as it were, are highly representative examples of the thematic concerns that are discussed in this dissertation.

In general, Lowell's "Union" captures, as "Totem" does, a helpless confrontation with an immediate historical past by presenting a viewing self that is separated from the scene it meditates. Likewise, Warren's "God" is cited to recapitulate the narration of a perceptive but disabled self. Bishop's "Over" and "Travel" disclose an ardent monologue of leaving behind the 'here' and 'now.' The certitudes built upon a home give way to adventures in travel. The anticipation to any place but where the traveler is highlights, in contrast, the looking back at the homeland the forced exile comes from in "Sonata."

In the other poems that are briefly compared with "Portrait," the common denominator is the forging of a problematic relationship between the man who is bound by patriarchal ideology and the woman suppressed by it. Pound's "Portrait" underscores a speaker's assertive comments on a subordinate mistress. Williams's "Portrait" presents a self-complacent speaker, who retells his pleasant sex with a docile lady. T. S. Eliot's "Portrait," then, is centered on a speaker's excursion into a past contact with a lady he has abandoned. All of these poems are narrated from a male speaker's viewpoint; he displaces the lady's voice and provides a monologic account of the event. The portrait turns out to be also a characterization of the man who speaks for the portrayed lady. This twofold disclosure helps to articulate the trio of man, woman, and patriarchy in Chen's "Portrait." Sexton's "The Play," finally, stages "an internally divided and isolated self" (Scarborough 185) that desires independence from patriarchal possession. The female speaker's soliloquy of resistance is analogous to the speaking voice that alternates between the actress and the narrator in "The Actress."

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[27] See Meng Fan's "Theory and Practice," 49.

V

Exploring the contemporary constitution of the self, this dissertation is concerned with the poet's narration. Dis/location in borderland and patriarchy, which has been introduced in the preceding sections, is therefore defined against the speaking voice in each of the selected poems. In other words, the shifting relationship between the poet and the speaker is approached to announce the emergence of the self in the poetic narratives. Kerby's observation is the point of departure in this dissertation: "Who or what the self . . . can be is a result of the semiotic and discursive practices and techniques within which the speaking subject functions" (113). Thus, in unfolding the "who" and "what," the dissertation dwells on the interplay of "semiotic positions—of speaking, spoken, and implied subjects" (Kerby 64) in the narratives.

Of immediate interest here is the projection of speaking voice. As Patrick O'Donnell claims in his *Figuring Voice in Modern Narrative*, "voice manifested presence . . . . Someone was sufficiently present to confer presence upon a fictitious . . . voice" (2). Thus, the poet and the speaker s/he creates become the subjects of speech in the narrative to speak to and/or for the spoken subject. The stance that grounds the relationship between the speaking and spoken subjects accumulates to constitute the self in the narrative. What appropriates the stance, moreover, is the shift of personal pronouns, or rather, the movement of perspectives that the shift exhibits. Inasmuch as the shift conforms to the changing subjects of speech in every linguistic utterance, the movement demonstrates, however implicitly, the history of the self's formulation. Accordingly, the movement is the narrative equivalent of the dialectic relationship inherent in the speaking voice. To disclose the self in the poetic narratives, therefore, this dissertation addresses the poet's way of incorporating and disseminating the speaking voice among different subjects. The correlated concerns of identity, subjectivity, and estrangement are analyzed along with the sociopolitical circumstances that interact with the poet's narration.

What follows then is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is devoted to "the historical self" in Luo Fu's "Totem." How and why the perspectives, especially those of the speaking "I" and the implied poet, are modulated to the construction of the self in historical narrative will be discussed. To illustrate the narrative, the speaker's reading of history in Lowell's "Union" will be compared with that in "Totem." By analogy, Lowell's anxious but vain attempt to withstand a historical issue will be examined side by side with Lou Fu's coping with the ambiguous history in Modern China. The tragic engagement with history that Warren's speaker endures in "God" will then be drawn upon to reveal Lou Fu's designating the "I" as a "sole walker." Both speakers are estranged by their keen awareness of exact falsehood in history.

Chapter two treats "the exiled self" in Luo Men's "Sonata." The entangled viewpoints of the "I," the "he," and the implied poet are where the self is constructed. Its endless exile will be compared with that in Bishop's "Travel" and "Over." The speaking voice in both poems is set out to revolve the destiny of staying away from home. Whereas in Bishop destiny is resolutely pursued, in Luo Men it is unbearably imposed. The former leads to variable movements in traveling but the latter yields to unchanging restlessness in displacement. Bishop's speaker is an implicit "I" that bears consistently a traveling disposition. Luo Men's speaker is split into "I" and "he." The third-person designation betrays a remote connection with what has once conferred identity upon the implied poet.

Chapter three deals with "the lonely self" in Chen's "Portrait." In the poem, the interplay between the isolated identity and the constructed femininity is keyed to the implied poet's assessment of the discord between "he" and "she" in Taipei. It is to the third party in the duet of man and woman that the poems by Williams, Pound, and Eliot are referred. The poems have in common a self-possessed monologue. The male speaker's portrait of the lady exposes himself without his knowing. The unawareness of being watched betrays a relationship that precludes impartiality and equality. How the twofold portrait is composed by the implied poet's stance illustrates the tripartite chorus in Chen's "Portrait."

Chapter four examines "the played self" in Feng Qing's "The Actress." The self is acted upon not just by patriarchal instruction of femininity but also by its mute resistance against it. The fact that the actress is expressed by a voice that is mostly other than its own is crucial to the self's constitution. Her inferior status as "she" and "it" corresponds to her doomed "struggle for subjectivity." In light of the actor's self-address in Sexton's "The Play," the actress' lack of articulation appears more conspicuous. Instead of being spoken, the actor speaks to and for herself. One "I" is presenting and articulating the lines that are immediately subjected to the criticism of the other "I." The split is further multiplied when the actor who speaks turns out to be the implied poet's double. How this "I" is complicated by and survives the playacting that overwhelms the actress will be drawn upon.

Thus, by analogy, comparison, or reference, the American and Chinese poems are juxtaposed. Evidently, each of the selected poems transmits an alarmed echo of the prenarrative that interrelates with the poet's narrative. History, exile, patriarchy, and femininity—the locus of either political or sexual domains—are studied in the following chapters to uncover the narration of identity, subjectivity, and estrangement. The objective of this study is to illuminate the poetic transfiguration of the self in the period from the late 80s to the early 90s. Hopefully, this study will activate a critical interest in the constitutive importance of the poetic narratives to the self that both tells and is told in the era of transition.

Chapter One

The Historical Self: A Study of Luo Fu's "The Non-Political Totem— Visiting Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Late Residence"

I

Since the civilian cross-strait relations between Taiwan and Mainland China are resumed in 1987, the public debate over unification and independence on the island has been intensifying. Many of the writers following the ROC government in retreat have prompted to think about their identities endorsed by the post-war sociopolitical realities on both sides.[1] Written in 1989, Luo Fu's "The Non-Political Totem" articulates a returning mainlander's complex about his self-identity in relation to contemporary Chinese history.[2] The critical force of the long poem lies in the poet's insistence on a "historical consciousness" (Luo Fu, *Angel* 86) projected to encompass the

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[1] The ROC government is the government of the Republic of China. It is designated sometimes as the KMT or Nationalist government, named after the ruling party, Kuomingtang.

[2] In the dissertation, mainlanders refer to those Chinese people who relocated from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan around 1949, the year of Communist take-over.

"entangled images of history and reality, individual and age, a great man and China's fate" (*Angel* 85). This series of images is accomplished through the retrieval of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's revolution; it reveals the poet's attempt to practice a critique on the realities that produced and were effected by the revolution. The poem, hence, bespeaks the poet's intent to define his self against history, within a conflation of the public, that is, the collective destiny of Chinese, and the private experience of their genealogy. This is carefully articulated by a first-person pronoun. By the coming of "I" to Dr. Sun's late residence on the mainland, superficial interpretations of Chinese Republic are exposed.

Read in this way, "Totem" witnesses a returning native's need for a continuous history and established identity, shortly after the cross-strait dialogue on a civilian basis began. When encoding the establishment and separation of Chinese republic, Luo Fu is concerned with the speaker's decoding the self that is involved in the prenarrative of China. The history originating from the "non-political totem" is the prenarrative, from which the speaker has to dig himself out. Through his reading of the totem, the poet sets out to unfold the significance of the totem and to rediscover beneath it the blurred figures of Chinese people at the same time. The self is therefore constructed on the basis of a historical sense that emerges from contesting perspectives. Put another way, the self is constructed on the speaker's refusal to read the totem as a "non-political' one, on his inner debates over an alternative stance, and finally, on his immersion within the historical narrative he struggles to withstand.

A study of the historical self in "Totem" thus is simultaneously a study on the variability of the "non-political totem" itself. Luo Fu's sense of historical truth bears a similarity with Robert Lowell's in "For the Union Dead" and Robert Penn Warren's in "A Way to Love God." The sense in common is that the knowledge about history, to use Smaro Kamboureli's words, is "dissolved and reconstituted with a difference" (90) in such a way that it challenges the making of a continuous self-identity. The historical sense allows the poets to invoke a speaker who is in a constant struggle to contact history beyond the mass of superficial representations. By the very fact that history is permeated with shallow words, the speaker's search for a substantial identity is permitted. "Union" stands out from Lowell's poems through its firm resistance to agree with the public view of a patriarchal ideal; while "God" is a bodying forth of Warren's concept of a self that is inflicted with its insight at the undercurrent of history. Like the speaker in "Totem," the speakers of the two poems are faced with "the imposing desolation of history" (Luo Fu, *Angel* 85).

The poet's narrative emplotment of the speaker's encountering with the prenarrative thus provides the guide for the present study. In "Totem," the speaker as a moving traveler is representative of the evolving unity of experience. At the same time as he passes through an exterior surroundings he undergoes an inner development. Step by step, the speaker's visit brings him to look further at the meaning of the prenarrative. A reciprocal progress is created between the narrative he lives out and the understanding he reaches concerning the self. Only when he enters the narrative as fully as possible is he marked with an identity the poet has gained earlier. Stated otherwise, the poet takes part again in the struggle for an identity through the speaker's coming to feel the increasing impact of history during his visit. This is achieved by the eventual sharing between the poet's understanding of history and the speaker's. The points where the speaker confronts the prenarrative thus will be discussed by analogies from the speaker's engagement with history and reality in Lowell's "Union" and Warren's "God."

II

"Totem" opens with the lines that indicate the speaker to be a quester in a turbulent reality: "Running after a hat blown away in the strong wind / I hurried into / An undefended history" (1-3).[3] His intrusive quest exposes him. He is contextualized around an absence, longing for the missed hat. The hat covers the head, which activates thinking. The hat that is "blown away" in the "strong wind" initiates the speaker to "brain wash" his original ideology and be ready for a new one. It is in this moment of suspense that he must try to redefine his relation to the "undefended history." The history, suggested to be unguarded and, hence, treacherous and threatening, reveals itself in the fact that "Here, there is more duplicated scenery / Than Cuiheng Village in the elementary textbooks. / More larks speaking common languages" (4-6).

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[3] "Totem" is collected in Luo Fu's *The Angel's Nirvana* 85-102. Throughout this dissertation, the parenthetical reference for the quotations designates the line number in the quoted poems. For the Chinese poems, the numbers refer to the lines in their English versions, which are my translation.

The realistic world appears no truer than the textual words. Both are duplicates and removed from the pictures in the speaker's memory. What was then and there has overcome a passage of time to claim originality. In fact, the speaker carries with him a life story he inherits long before his homecoming. His feeling is that of a generation that first visits the land left behind because of the Communist take-over. The sense of familiarity in difference is further expressed with "common languages," a name for Mandarin.[4] Language, Kerby states, "is itself an important part of that [our] reality, part of its very texture" (2). The language heard by the speaker is not simply a tool for communication but is a mode of discourse with supporting institutions and systems. It is, indeed, a common manifestation of reality in the mainland. And since "the basis of subjectivity is in the exercise of language" (Benveniste 226), the speaker, who shares the same language and yet has remained outside its reality until now, is obliged to touch the reality and constitute again his subjectivity in and through the "common language."

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[4] Mandarin, or, Putong Hua, could be literally translated as "common language," which is the official language of Taiwan and Mainland China.

The first contact is where the "undefended history" is made and unmade. Knowing that "some sections in the history / Have never been touched before; / If touched, the printed words in the books will crumble" (11-13), the speaker stands "now" (14) "in the heart spot of it / To read its childhood, youth, adulthood, old age, / Legacy, chronicle, pedigree, and diversities of age" (14-16). As the past history becomes synchronous with the moment of reading, the speaker's relation to history is altered. Like an archaeologist, the speaker is occupied with the task of discovering not so much the meaning of the personified history as his own self that is defined against the historical background. His reading thus enables the poet to construct a historical self in the end. To complete the construction, the poet has the speaker recover himself out of the ruins of the crumbled history. The history is composed with "common language" in its full sense and decomposed at the immediacy of the speaker's close reading.

In fact, it is a reading that proceeds from the poet's historical consciousness. The "I" in the foreword to the poem is different from that in the poem itself. The first refers to the poet himself who expresses both the poem's making and its presence as a witness to the prenarrative. The past tense of the foreword is the future of the speaker who reads the narrated prenarrative. In other words, the speaker is to travel the semantic horizon demarcated by the poet. His trip to the village is the one that is destined to trace the poet's consciousness of Chinese history. The speaker's reading, as it were, is a starting point of developing the consciousness. His wonder and ingenuous perception of history, suggested in such lines as "Worship mixed with mood for sightseeing, / I walk while scraping my head" (18-19), will be changed. A resigned, deep thought of history will engross his "head," that is reminiscent of the lost "hat" at the beginning of the poem. The change takes place first where the exposed head is wondering at the question:

> Except for making the bombs, the republic, and roses
> What can we learn from a revolutionist?
> For a long time
> A bomb
> And
> Another bomb
> Having been gazing at each other.
> A Republic
> And
> Another Republic
> Having been silently facing each other.
> In between, except for emitting the love's electric wave,
> What else can the rose say? (20-32)

The signifying potential of the question resides in the implicit juxtaposition of love and politics. The images of "the bombs, the republic, and roses" symbolize violence, the ideal, and passion that are usually common in love and politics. They all aim for a communion and may end at either violating or consummating the relationship between the self and the other. Obviously, the speaker's question itself is an ironic answer to the complex of hegemony between Taiwan and Mainland China. The two political states "learn from" the "revolutionist" only "making" itself. While Dr. Sun Yat-sen destroys the conventional Chinese political system in order to establish an ideal one, the states split from the founded republic cease at doing violence to each other's existence. Ironically, the republics seem to gain in strength and identity by setting themselves off against each other. They see the difference between them as a deviation from their dominance and are concentrated on pursuing military superiority. Yet, a danger is imminent here too. Their "gazing" and "facing" made possible by physical closeness render impossible a clear view of the situation they are engaged with. They are too close to protect themselves from the "electric wave" that may ignite the bombs.

From the rivalry between Taiwan and China, the speaker's consciousness travels back to the tragedy of enforced separation and helpless waiting and aging. The contemporary history of the Chinese people is condensed in a sequence of carefully arranged images focusing first on displacement and later on temporality. The speaker asks, meditates, and is lost in history. The prenarrative brings the self to the edge of disappearing from the reality of "right now" (39). Not until a certain time has passed does the speaker find that "we are at the gate of the memorial hall" (40) and

> The young clerk
> Points to the forty-year simplified character "Sun" and says:
> This is a harmless
> Non-political totem
> And Renminbi can go everywhere unrestrainedly.[5] (41-45)

In a "character," the "forty-year" tragedy is "simplified." It is a history unable to be fathomed by the post-war generation, which the "young clerk" belongs to. For the generation, Dr. Sun's family name is understood economically as a totem for the past history. For the poet, whose generation suffers the national predicament of war, however, "Sun" may itemize all those sounds and furies in the past. The younger generation's approach to it is really too "simplified."

For the character that is seen as a totem is by no means "non-political." The character, in fact, is taken up and transported into an expanding network of displays and narratives that propose an orthodoxy of the communist republic. It is captured, sketched, and altered. Its simplified strokes show that Sun's ideal has been rewritten and abstracted. Like the bombs and republics quoted earlier, the totem expresses the armed conflict in microcosm. In *The Space Between Literature and Politics*, Jay Cantor states that "words to us now are absence of something" (21). Similarly, the totem testifies to the absence rather than to the presence of an acknowledged continuity of history. It is precisely this very absence that necessitates a fixed gaze on the "Sun" in order to authenticate, and authorize, its meaning—"a harmless / non-political totem"—in political representation. In other words, the character is manipulated to "enable a culture to represent itself as legitimate" (Colebrook 215).

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[5] Renminbi, or, "people's money," is the currency of the mainland.

"A word can only signify," Claire Colebrook comments, "if it is recognized, and recognition occurs with familiarity and repetition' (214). In order for the totem to be recognized, the "Sun" has to be circulated and the narratives on it reiterated. "Thus, with fifty cents" (46) the speaker "buy[s] the boundless desolation of the half afternoon" (47). The history that radiates from the "Sun" is traded at a low price to Chinese sightseeing visitors from the other side of the strait. The monetary images serve to define the material ground of the "memorial hall," which is managed for a purpose of acquisition in a specifically economic setting. The parallel wordings of "fifty" and "half," moreover, mark a Republic that is cheapened and divided. Indirectly, Luo Fu makes known the view that the "memorial hall" holds only part of the history associated with the doctor. Read in this way, the totem is anything but "non-political." Instead, it is commercially and politically represented. The speaker's sense of "boundless desolation" that will be gradually spelled out in the other sections of the poem forecasts the falsehood of the "non-political totem."

The falsehood could be illustrated through a comparison between "Totem" and Lowell's "Union." Both poems dwell on the loss of an ideal that is measured against contemporary reality. Like Luo Fu, Lowell lines up key images from the past into a pattern which illuminates the present. The pattern turns out to give the title an enriched meaning that would otherwise be lost. In "Union,"[6] Lowell correlates three major images: the old "South Boston Aquarium" (1), the "underworld garage" (16), and the memorial of "Colonel Shaw / and his bell-cheeked Negro infantry" (21-22).[7] Just as "Sun" is employed as a powerful political act, so "Shaw" is treated to represent a spirit that solidifies a national identity. The two historical figures play an effective role in the creation of social wholes; the doctor carries out the founding of a democratic republic and the Colonel fights for the unity of a federal government. As society evolves, however, their names are degraded. The Chinese one becomes a totem for political and economic interests, while the American is "a fishbone / in the city's throat" (29-30). The city people are eager to discard all those things that block their ways of acquiring profits and mobility. The aquarium is closed down, presumably to make room for the construction of the garage, which also threatens the Shaw memorial; the monument is now "propped by a plank splint against the garage's earthquake" (24).

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[6] The poem is quoted from Lowell's *Poems* 95-97.

[7] Robert Gould Shaw was the Colonel who led the first all-Negro regiment in the Union Army during the Civil War.

Apparently, "to endanger the Shaw memorial for the sake of a garage," Robert Phillips points out, "is to forget the meaning of Shaw's death or to deny that this meaning still matters" (72); it is "a failure of memory" (72), a "denial of history" (72). The soldiers died in the past battle, and the patriotic spirit and selfless sacrifice left behind are killed again by "giant finned cars nose[ing] forward like fish" (66). Soon, the monument will be totally annihilated like the aquarium: "Lowell's poem [Union] enacts the death of the statue," Gabriel Pearson interprets, and "its final envelopment by unmeaning" (23). The Union thus suffers a double death in a "modern urban devastation" (23). Like the title "the Non-Political Totem," "For the Union Dead" bears an ironic overtone that intimates the poet's response to the aberrant treatment of a historical past. To the extent that both poems concern themselves with history, they present a reality that misses the historicity of its existence. The reality wants only its temporal specificity. In the social context where the totem is, the "Sun" is appropriated to fit a temporal political situation. In Boston, the destruction of the "old" aquarium and the bracing of the memorial are meant to bring forth only a parking lot to contain the flow of modern cars. The past is undone and, simultaneously, the ideals of reform and civic order are destroyed.

III

Yet, for the poet with historical consciousness, the past remains intersected with his living moment. In the third section of "Totem," the speaker's consciousness is constantly distracted from the present, back to the past, and stays at the converged moment of the two. From such a moment, a deepened thought of the prenarrative of China emerges to impinge upon the speaker's identity. This is marked out mostly in the lines touching the relation between voice and body.

The first case appears in the opening lines put in parenthesis: "(Before entering the hall, / I eat a red pomegranate; / Its core stuffs my throat and silences me for a while)" (48-50). The words here sound like an explanation as well as a recollection of the speaker's keeping silent. Silent while listening to the "welcome words of the curator" (51), the speaker undergoes a disruptive course of identification. "Voice," Patrick O'Donnell observes, is "both projection and disruption of subjectivity" (24). The presence of voice confers subjectivity upon the self who articulates, while the absence of it detains this practice until the self is voiced out. The stuffed throat thus expresses a suspension of the speaker's subjectivity. During his stay in the memorial, his identity is subject to the narratives that trouble his state of mind. Because he can listen to whatever is concealed behind the words, he is constantly travelling to the world buried in the absence of utterance. As a result, whenever the speaker is called back again by the narratives articulated here and now, his identity has been changed slightly by "remembrance of things past."

"The welcome words of the curator," for example, prompt the speaker to think finally that "The air-conditioner is adjusted to a point not too left nor too right / That reminds me of a one-line poem on the Tiananmen Square" (53-54). Unquestioningly, the welcome is received with a mind that has been carried away by the confrontation between democracy and communism. "A point not too left nor too right" bespeaks, in fact, the attempt of domesticating the other through camouflaged neutrality. "One poetic line," moreover, is reminiscent of the scorched and starving students whose movement lasts so briefly and yet, exists, after all, like an extremely condensed work. The students' rebel against a communist government is reminiscent of the doctor's revolution against autocracy. Just as the poem on the square fails to develop into a complete one, the revolution led by the doctor and decades later, by the students, fail to reform China into a democratic country. This explains why the speaker, "perturbed and timorous" (55), is "afraid / That the china cup will suddenly explode in my stomach" (56-57). Obviously, there is an association of china and China in the speaker's soliloquy. His fear is that of being broken by the bits and shreds of the piercing thoughts on his mind. Surely, the stomach cannot digest the pain of empathy. Following the "one-line poem on the Tiananmen Square," these lines imply the speaker's silent identification with Chinese people who are terrified and hushed.

The empathetic identification, moreover, registers a growing historical consciousness that is further revealed in the succeeding lines: "' It's a nice day,' says the curator. / But what I think is those bad years" (58-59). Again, the speaker's mind escapes from a shallow talk to set itself on what has happened in the poignant history of China. Famine, death, corruption, violence and humiliation—China's suffering and impotence in the late Qing Dynasty—surge in the speaker's mind. And then, coming to contemporary Chinese history, the speaker's mind is focused on the deteriorating mainland:

> Li Hongchang had a big sized spittoon.
> Mao Zedong had a middle-sized spittoon.
> Deng Xiaoping had a small-sized spittoon.
> I suddenly feel the throat itchy.
> Looking around, I ask:
> Mister, on what part of China would you suggest
> I spit out this mouthful of blood clot? (66-72)

Because of their roles as influential rulers, the three politicians are representative of the sociopolitical environment at their time. And since spittoons are made to hold foul spit, the environment they are involved in is suggested to be loathsome and consumptive. Besides, the spittoons are variously owned and get diminutive over time. Their encapsulation in the repeated syntax recounts a political degeneration that has being handed down. The sickened heritage derives perhaps from the overflow of saliva, of speech, and accordingly, of voice in contrast with the hushed silence on the public square. In short, the whole country is infected by an overriding ideology that spreads in voice. The politicians with spittoons are, hence, responsible. The Chinese country is contaminated by thick saliva. Against this, the speaker resists with words and blood. The throat is the channel to propel thinking to reach the mouth and gush out. The speaker's asking, which makes his throat itchy and not vice versa as the lines seem to say, tells his poignant thought of protest. But just as the "Mister" stands alone as a mute third person, so the speaker's question is articulated in silence and without "your" answer. The whole of China has been changed and kept dormant.

Only the landscape has remained relentlessly the same: "The birds chirp as that year; /The rivers meander as that year; / . . . " (75-77). Looking "outside the window" (73), the speaker stops his mediation on the past and finds that

> The autumn has not really arrived.
> Yet, the leaves in scattered words have begun
> To fall and drift from different angles.
> One leaf brushes on my cheek.
> It hurts a little; it is hard to trace the cause.
> On the branch sits a quiet fruit,

Like my head in retrospection,
Attentively listens to
The echoes of history's falling. (78-86)

Preceded by several lines about a picture of subdued time, these lines smack of an autumn-like tone. Unlike the cheerfulness at the beginning of the poem, the tone here falls to echo the speaker's disheartened consciousness of history. Compared to dropping leaves, a sequence of historical narratives descends to stroke the speaker's mind. The mind wandering between past history and present reality is embodied by "cheek" and "head" with a connotation similar to that of the "stomach" and "throat" discussed above. The "cheek," a synecdoche of the speaker, shows that "the head in retrospection," or rather, the speaker recalling the past, is faced with a pain of apprehension. An unseen wind is swelling its force across the mainland; the leaves "drift" and history falls. The history narrated in "scattered words" and approached from "different angles" is understood to arrive at the point of decline. The "quiet fruit," personified perhaps for its having a round shape like the head too, knows the coming of fall and yet can say nothing.

Similarly, the speaker "who attentively listens to / the echoes of history's falling" sits "quiet" still. His repose comes from listening to the silence between words. Instead of heeding what the curator says, the speaker minds what is not spoken in his words. Forgetting the present, he remembers the past at the expanse of memory. His memory disallows a settled, complacent living at any moment. As a result, the speaker is obliged to live in a drifting time, crossing the temporal horizon now and then. This is also what the speaker in Warren's "God" experiences.

Warren's speaker has also been confronted with history, which asks him to be silent. The history he knows is the dark page inscribed with violence and helpless sufferings. "Here is the shadow of truth, for only the shadow is true" (1).[8] The truth of history seems to exist only in absence of light and is always obscured in its entire dreadfulness. The person going to stare at its truth thus ought to have an insight capable of penetrating the appalling dimness. Yet, such an insight drives the viewer to leave behind the daylight reality. Just as the speaker in "Totem" withdraws from his present moments in recollection, the speaker in "God" surrenders the present to his obsession with what has happened in the past. He cannot help remembering the past though he says to his listener that "I cannot recall what I started to tell you…" (6) and that "I do not recall what had burdened my tongue…" (14). In fact, the self-awareness of what he has forgotten, reluctant or not, indicates by just remembering a preoccupation with the past. Memory compels him to keep silent at what he sees through history: a repetitious exchange of desperation and resignation. Still, he tells how he feels indirectly. Compared with the speaker in "Totem," he is more self-inflicted with a dilemma of remembrance and forgetfulness. He is too knowledgeable to obliterate what he has learned and too sensitive to forget it without feeling guilty. He knows not only that "Everything seems an echo of something else" (21) but also

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[8] Warren's poem is quoted from his *New and Selected Poems* 165-166.

> You would think that nothing would ever again happen.
>
> That is a way to love God. (36-7)

The stanza break is implicitly connected by an invisible subordinate conjunction, "if." If the condition in the first sentence comes true, the consequence in the second will follow. The problem is that nothing will never again not happen; everything repeats. "Your" thinking is based on the circumstance when things happening in the future appear like those at present and, by inference, in the past; when temporal succession is flattened by repetition, "you" are likely to get used to everything and responsive to nothing. Henceforward, there will be no difference between anything and in the sense, nothing will ever again happen. But that is how "you" would feel. The unspoken words inherent in the subjunctive mood impart a different attitude adopted by the speaker. For the speaker, "everything *seems*" (emphasis added) and *is* not "an echo of something else." He seems to see a variation in the repetition. The happenings echo their past phantoms in a sound gradually dying away in "an upland" (26). After "death rattle" (4) come "moan" (12) in the mountain, boot "bang" (20) in the distance, moving lips "without sound" (24), and finally, "sheep huddling" (29), "stupid" (31) and "unmoving" (35) in the midnight. The ominous silence in the end foreshadows a happening that will be similar to the one before and yet, different from the past in its power of causing suffering. Whereas "you" learns to love God by becoming indifferent, the speaker learns to bear sufferings in a way that questions God's role in the history of human sufferings. The overtone of "spiritual grimness" (*Robert Penn Warren* 9) to borrow Harold Bloom's words, constitutes the speaker's identity as a skeptic. The skeptic's unspoken questioning is prepared by the truth he knows in "remembrance of things past." In short, he is the one who secures truth at the expanse of belief. And this, to be sure, is what the speaker will gradually experience in "Totem."

In the forth section of "Totem," the speaker lapses into sleep and realizes that "Because we have slept, / Culture regresses and / Politics degenerates" (90-92). The conflation of the private and the public inertia brings together also an intersection of the past and the present. The spacey layout of "we have slept" and an immediate passage of prose-like lines imply this. The typographical shape captures the speaker's vision of Chinese history in its "recent few hundred years" and contemporary age:

We have
Slept
Have

Slept . . . .   (93-96)

As soon as the tape recorder is turned on, our heads are awakened by his steel-like Cantonese language of officialdom, awakened from one year before the year before the intermittent pain of 1924; from the resounding drum of the South, from the crumbling noise of the opium couches, from the nightmare of the long and black queues, from the bondage of those rubbish, shameful, damned humiliating treaties, from the first gun shot at Wuchang Battalion in the Xinhai year, from the falling gray clothes under the Lugo Bridge, from the frequent breaths of Japanese bombs, from the blood-thirsty thorns, from the escapes' rustling footsteps, from the bloody light of the clash between the greedy, selfish right hand and the cruel, torturing left hand, from a big bag of cocaine hidden in the Mao's Little Red Book, from many bubble-like lies, from the students' suicide notes, from the rumbling of the tanks on the square,
From the mumbling thunder at Cuiheng Village in the afternoon,
I suddenly awake.   (97-109)[9]

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[9] In the Chinese version, the stanza is divided into two parts. The first part is a prose-like paragraph. It runs into several lines based on the printed form rather than on the poet's arrangement as it is in the second part that is deliberately composed of two lines only. To follow this format, the lines of the

The speaker's vision is the memory of history put to sleep. History comes over when the listener hearkens to the narrative out of noise. The last line quoted here, "I suddenly awake," thus is critical to the transformation from slumber to attention. Read carefully, the line announces a state of mind awakened not just from the mechanical narrative of history but from the acoustic play of that narrative. Because the speaker is awake, the narrative is interpreted with a difference. To grasp his interpretation, it is necessary to discuss the interrelated identities of China, Dr. Sun, and the speaker revealed in the passage, which, in turn, will explain why the speaker learns "a way to love" China in disbelief.

The national identity of China in this passage is a lamentable other even to its citizens. China is seen as suppressed and exploited with regard to political imperialism and the Sino-Japanese war. Along with this, it has an identity best described as degenerate, corrupt, and self-

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first part, when translated into English, do not appear like the ones in the second part, which form an obvious unit according to punctuation or syntax. Taking into consideration the format of the dissertation, I do not change the font and spatial arrangement of the first part I quote to match its translated version. If so, the indentation and spacing of the quotation will be changed so much as to sacrifice the impression given by the prose-like paragraph. For the sake of reference, however, the line numbers put in parenthesis still follow the exact ones in translation rather than those appearing in the chapter.

destructive in the lines referring back to the decaying politics of Qing dynasty and to the political division and tyranny. What gives China a likeness of alterity is not just an intrusion that removes its original outlook but also the result of its own efforts, which treat its people as its subjects. Chinese people are metaphorically hallucinated, poisoned, and literally killed by their own government. "The tanks rumbling on the square" toll the death of those who disagree with the government.[10]

It is the tragic ending that gives Dr. Sun's voice a significant role in both the spiritual and physical sleep, or rather, death. "Speech," Kerby believes, "is called forth by a social situation" (110). Conversely, speech recalls the prenarrative that brings it into being. The doctor's "steel-like Cantonese" reiterates what the Chinese people have gone through "in the recent few hundred years" (87). His voice, once projected to awaken people to establish a republic, is played now in the deformed republic that puts people to permanent sleep. His presence, manifested in the voice, moreover, enhances the tragic irony. Identified as a patriotic revolutionist, the doctor, dead, is incorporated into a political institution that refuses to listen to the students' demand for reform.[11] In a sense, the doctor started the revolution to change the identity of China in his time. Its identity in the speaker's time, however, does not match the doctor's idea of it. The doctor's identity, constructed out of the destiny of China then, is employed furthermore to represent the identity of China now as legitimate and authoritative.

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[10] The image of "tank" may derive from the June-Forth Event of Tiananmen Square, to which the poet refers in the foreword and the poem itself. The Communist government allocated tanks to suppress and kill the students who asked for a dialogue with the concerned authority in order to promote a democratic reformation of the mainland.

The specific incompatibility between Dr. Sun's vision of an ideal China and the reality China becomes is subject to the speaker's contemplation. Accordingly, the recorded words are intersected with the speaker's consciousness of the recent events in the mainland. This is justified by the last three lines in the prose-like passage, the one referring to the tank, in particular. It is impossible for the tape to convey the suggestion of recent persecution. Evidently, the suggestion comes from the speaker's own words as a substitution for the played words. The speaker's consciousness thus has the task of revising the narrative he hears. "The narratives of history," remarks Colebrook, "are just further ways of creating borders, boundaries and exclusions" (212). In terms of political review and criticism, the speaker expands on the narrative to include a perspective that undermines its intended meaning. Ushered in by the doctor's "language of officialdom," the narrative is meant to reiterate how the Chinese people have established a "steel-like," powerful country in accordance with the doctor's ideal. Concluded by the sound of the "tank," which is made of steels, the message of the narrative is ironically questioned and the government endorsed by the narrative, distrusted.

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[11] See note 7.

The implicit disruption between the recorded narrative and the revised one corresponds to the speaker's disintegrating mind, which sinks progressively into indignation and delirium. The preposition "from" in the quoted passage is followed several times by phrases of violent experiences. Instead of waking immediately "from" a doze, the speaker descends "from" reality to a delirium, in which he sees consecutive images of buried truth. When he strives physically to awaken, the images come one after the other to enclose him within an era that "regresses" and "degenerates." Unlike the speakers in "Union" and "God" and himself earlier in "Totem," the speaker at this stage is unable to hold the chaotic experience of violence at a distance. He visualizes the experience in his very eye and is plunged emotionally into its "chronicle."

He awakes from his own vision only after "the mumbling thunder at Cuiheng Village in the afternoon" is heard. The "mumbling thunder" is resonant with the "rumbling tank" appearing just one line ahead in the passage. The two sounds are similarly low and deep. The similarity enables the suggestion of death to echo from the tank to the thunder. To "awake" "suddenly" from the "mumbling thunder" is thus to awake from the fear of being threatened and killed. The fear betrays the critical nature of the revised narrative, which, analogously, threatens persecution to those who dare dissent. It follows that the speaker does awaken to a sense of understanding. The more he sees the "lies," "notes," and violence of history, the more he understands the silence on its surface—history puts heterogeneous voices to sleep, or, death, in effect. The awakening thus announces a heightened historical consciousness on the speaker's part. He is transformed to resemble more closely the poet himself. The transformation will be complete when the speaker gradually identifies himself with the doctor and, correspondingly, when his criticism gives way to a resigned sense of sadness.

IV

Identification here begins with a mind open to foreign thinking or view. When the speaker says that "I scratch my head again" (113), a gesture he repeatedly does during his visit, he is forecasting his encounter with what he has not thought or seen before. In the fifth section, the speaker visiting the residence is accompanied by a figure gradually emerging as the doctor in the speaker's imagination. This is first suggested in the lines proceeding his scraping: "I hold a palm of dandruff— / The fossil of a handful of troublesome thoughts / Thus follow the host / To enter his late residence" (114-117). In the Chinese version of the poem, the "fossil" could stand both as an object to supplement the "dandruff" in the previous line and a subject to do the action of "follows" in the next line. In the first case, it is more likely for the speaker to follow the host of the residence, and in the second, for the personified thought, a synecdoche of the speaker too, to follow himself as the host of the mind. The ambiguous position of "fossil" enables a double reading of the "host." The "host" is at once the speaker just discharged from too much thinking and the doctor invoked by such thinking. Before entering the residence, therefore, the speaker has taken with him the doctor's image, which will be his guide to his visit, and his own mind, which is collecting the relics of the past.

Within the residence, "on the right side of the yard" (121), the speaker perceives that

> There is a plum tree once he planted.
> The tree is sour and, yet, its flowers not.
> They are said to be relished as brewed tea.
> But they bloom and then fade instantly,
> Like the rising sun on the Chinese horizon.
> After a thunderstorm in year,
> The waist of its trunk broke; it became a hunchback.
> Its original vast and thick shade
> Shrinks to less than ten feet. (122-130)

Apparently, the plum tree stands symbolically in relation to the doctor's ideal and the reality of China then and now. It is first of all emblematic of the doctor's fortitude in defense against China's headlong destiny. "Once he planted" and grew his revolutionary ideas to prevent China from regression. The flowers in bloom display a short-lived splendor out of a long-termed hardship. There was once a time in the late history of China when an ideal succeeded to flourish out of the "sour," bitter reality, where the tree struggled to take root. But the time was too short to be true. It is just "said" and exists as an anecdote. The story of the tree captures both historical evidence and nostalgia for the lost ideal. The momentary brightness in China is gone, perhaps, with the death of the doctor and his ideal.[12] The founded republic, a shelter for Chinese like the "thick shade" of the tree, is then destroyed in a hideous political climate as indicated by the image of the "thunderstorm." Inasmuch as the thunder is reminiscent of persecution as discussed already, its breaking the tree signifies the termination of political reform. Likewise, the shrinking of the tree shade foreshadows the ending of that which survives the national calamity. Just as Lowell's broken aquarium recalls by contrast a secured world of the past and the Shaw memorial, a vanished ideal of government and heroism in "Union," the split tree in "Totem" mournfully commemorates Sun's striving for Republic of China.

Faced with this occurrence of diminution, "Someone is awakened; / Someone else buries his head in the blanket for a deep sleep" (133-134). The contrast of attitude gives away the speaker's own choice. He is whatever the sleeper is not. The one who muffles his consciousness in a death-like rest is not so much indifferent to reality as taking flight in forgetfulness. An unspoken pain of conscience deliberately buries the head. A manner like this is not quite different from that in "Union." There, Lowell's speaker takes the position of "a concerned but passive witness" (Phillips 74): "When I crouch to my television set, / the drained faces of Negro school-children rise like balloons" (59-60). The children in demonstration are separated from the witness by a wall of screen. Like the fish in the broken aquarium, their "drained faces" are destined to wither in oblivion. Implicitly, Luo Fu and Lowell expose a way of viewing reality as typical of most of the people. Participation is possible only for the "awakened" one. Awakening promises one a time to approach reality with moral responsibility. The speaker in "Totem" is certainly the one who wakens and longs to take part in the action. His head is uncovered and raised up in order to make a contact with reality. Actually, what he sees in the doctor is the will to realize the potentiality, to enter the struggle with reality as fully as possible.

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[12] Dr. Sun Yat-sen was born in 1866 and died of liver illness in 1925, at the age of 59.

Thus the speaker "scratch[es]" his "head" (135) for the third time, ready again for another discovery. "Following the direction of the host's finger" (140), he sees "a bed of hero's dream startled by the sword's howl" (146) among "a pan . . . " (141), "a furnace . . . " (142), "a bowl . . . " (143), "a ladle . . . " (144), and "a chair . . . " (145). The finger points to a shift of focus. In the light of Roman Jakobson's terminology, the shift is that of projection from the metaphoric pole to the metonymic pole in the poetic function of language.[13] In this regard, coming after the vertical, or, metaphoric, function of the speaker's gaze at the tree, therefore, is the gaze that is horizontal, or, metonymic, in direction, revealing an immediately experiential world of the hero. The world is embodied in artifacts; it is both externalized in the juxtaposition of them and internalized by the phrase that modifies their singular forms. The blank between the singular noun and the phrase emulates the brief moment when the speaker's visualization of the hero's inner world takes place. The speaker's view of the bed, for instance, is associated with the doctor's desire for change. The doctor is seen alone, in the night, turning wide awake by a metal cry for action. From the bed to the sword, the speaker has been exploring the doctor's mind in the immediacy of his gaze. In doing so, he is emptying the self out for the admittance of the other.

The other is the host who shows the speaker the interior of the residence. In fact, the host is Dr. Sun coming to inscribe his being in the speaker's consciousness. This is made clear in the lines capturing the motion of the doctor's body. We see the speaker "follow him to *enter* the study, / …. / In the deep night, he *sat* as a cool and solemn peak, / *Looking* up and down, *groping* / For a sharp operation scalpel" (147-

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[13] For Jaokbson's elucidation of metaphor and metonymy, see two extracts that are reprinted in *Modern Criticism and Theory*: "Linguistics and Poetics," 32-57 and "The metaphoric and metonymic poles," 57-61.

151; emphasis added). The intent observation reflects the speaker's growing identification with the doctor. His "study" of the doctor's mind furthers this argument: "He expected a storm, / Just as he expected the dawn. / He would make a steel-like spirit / For the trouserless people, / To instill the protein of the morning light / Into the impotent tomorrow" (155-160). The study discloses a shared expectation to the extent that the speaker's own desire for an alternative finds an outlet in the doctor's vigilant meditation on making possible a powerful China. Indeed, it is a study based on the speaker's vicarious experience of the doctor's anxiety and hope. A catastrophe at night should come first and lead to a promising tomorrow. The reconstruction of China ought to be paid for by its undergoing destruction first. The study thus retrieves the doctor's decisive revolution from a predicament. The successful attempt to reform China is what the speaker longs for and, yet, is found only as absent within his own world, invoked only within the self. It is this suppressed longing that encourages the speaker's identification with the doctor, which enhances the longing in return.

In a way, the speaker's identification is mediated through his renewed understanding of history. Only when he probes beneath the surface of history and unearths the startling fact of repetitious regression is he compelled to sense the demand for variation. Chinese history seems to reach the moment that is in need of a figure like the doctor. The moment, however, allows only the "non-political totem" that is abstracted from the doctor's name. His spirit of altruism, of devotion, of resolve to ask for a bright tomorrow fails to survive political confrontation and oppression in disguise. History on account of such a deceptive reality situates the speaker in a helpless demand he should not have felt if he had not read the "heart spot" of history in the first place. Because he reads it, he hears "China's irregular heartbeats" (170) and works out the doctor's mind to operate his new understanding of it. The closer he gets to the core of history, the more he identifies himself with the doctor, who ever challenged the sociopolitical reality on his own.

This identification becomes all the more conspicuous when the speaker shares the doctor's concern over the destiny of China in the following lines: "I try hard to check a sneeze, seeing / Him with a face of passion stand up with a thump" (163-164), "Caressing the scattered remnant on the desk—" (168), and "A writing brush: Li Hongchang, allow me to speak about / The critical things of rise and fall" (172-173). When the speaker sees the doctor's "face," he also sees the doctor's "passion." The doctor's emotion in the instant of its presence is faced with the speaker's consciousness, which grasps and reveals the inner states of himself and the doctor. Like the doctor, the speaker is also lifted up by a tide of patriotic fervor. The tide, which the speaker is obliged to submerge as he has to "check a sneeze," is set free by the doctor's "thump" that reverberates his passion. The doctor's "face of passion" thus holds up a mirror to the speaker's mind of eagerness. Through an optical projection into the other's mind, the speaker encounters the self in the end of his "sightseeing." A "remnant" is itself such only to the person located in the present rather than in the past when it was left over. In this respect, the doctor "caressing the scattered remnant" brings into view, in fact, the speaker himself. He touches the brush now because of an urge to articulate the "critical things." The doctor's writing to Li Hongchang thus verbalizes the speaker's mind in the hope of communicating his view of the prenarrative he lives out in the present.

It is this craving aroused by a solicitous care for history that transforms the speaker to be no one but the implied poet himself. The doctor's writing and, accordingly, the speaker's desire for it are reminiscent of the poet's words in the foreword: "Although the poet is not a history-creator, he cannot deny himself the consciousness of being a witness to history. In this poem, the perception of history and reality, combined with individual emotion and meditation, characterizes my writing of a short lyric epic" (86). The historical consciousness triggers the writing of "Totem" just as it does Dr Sun's. appeal against the political system. Dr. Sun, when asking for allowance, is not yet a creator of history just as the poet in composing the poem is not. The completion of the poem, like that of the doctor's writing, therefore, tells not so much the history with which the writer is concerned as the emergence of a historical self. "Narratives," Kerby asserts, "are a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, or experience, and ultimately of ourselves" (3). The doctor's writing manifests eventually his identity as a political reformer. Similarly, the poet's narrative of the speaker's becoming concerned with the prenarrative imprints his own historical self on paper. The poet sets up the speaker's identity that is gradually reconstructed as a version of himself.

V

The historical self comes to its full being when the speaker becomes what he is not in the beginning of his visit. The conversion of existence is evidenced in Luo Fu's final section that is rich with connotations:

> Three o'clock in the afternoon, I still cannot catch my hat,
> But the countenance of Cuiheng Village has suddenly changed.
> Resoundingly comes a summer downpour.
> August is no longer quiet, (182-185)

Echoing the first section, the beginning lines here conclude the speaker's change. The disappearance of the hat signifies the absence of the speaker's original thinking and identity. After he goes through the history marked by the "non-political totem," he no longer bears his "elementary" impression of it. Nor does he remain as the same person who travels as a visitor. The changed "countenance of Cuiheng Village" delineates the speaker's changed perspective. From a view inspired by understanding, the village ceases to be a mere geographical place taken to be the destination of his journey. It is also a space created by his launching out into the narrative of history, a space where his identity is transformed. The emotion that is central to the transformation is caught in the "summer downpour." The heavy rain comes as a signal to the speaker's mind full to overflowing with apprehension of history. August is thus "no longer quiet." The "beating" (186) rain resounds in tune with the mind that "seethed with complicated impact" (86), which the poet confesses in the foreword. Naturally, the rain manifests the troubled torrent of the mind. In each beat of the "downpour," the turbulent mind is spelled out.

Apart from the torrent within, the "downpour" may signify the overwhelming circumstance outside. The following lines validate this reading:

> The rain cleans up the summer's desire, washes away
> The disarranged footsteps of those who study history;
> It also exposes the deeper wound under the mud. (190-192)

The political climate arrests the desire to burst into words. Throughout the whole poem, the speaker is bound to keep silent; his throat is stuffed and his sneeze is checked; he sees, reads, thinks, asks; and yet, he does not speak out what he learns and doubts. The "summer downpour" predicted by the "mumbling thunder" thus may also fall down with a threat. "Those who study history" are confronted with the climate that threatens to terminate the reading and even themselves. Viewed from this point, "the disarranged footsteps" stand for the readers' "perturbed and timorous" states of mind. The states, furthermore, are disturbed by readers' protest against, or escape from, the threat that is posed like a thundershower. Whether it is escape or protest, their attempt is rendered futile in the end. The thundershower "washes away" the footsteps and, concomitantly, the reading and the readers. History becomes a text bereft of interpretation. It is left alone—"undefended." The "undefended history," which the speaker "hastily enter[s]" in the beginning of the poem, paradoxically defends itself against criticism. As such, it is this defensiveness that covers history "under the mud." The debased aspect of history is exposed when the readers are thunderstruck, stunned by the "injury inflicted" (110) on "those who study history."[14] The more one gets involved with the study, the "deeper wound" one gets. It hurts when one learns that one is helpless to restore the history that is not without any impairment itself.

No reader is immune from the hurt. The temporary retreat of the first-person singular suggests the shared destiny. When the speaker appears in the succeeding lines, his state of mind epitomizes a serious reader of Chinese history:

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[14] Together with the succeeding lines, the line from which "injury inflicted" is quoted refers again to the June-Forth Event: "Injury inflicted in *June* / Still hurts in July. / Not until August did they know some flowers were not to be picked" (110-112; emphasis added).

> With a tattered umbrella,
> I rush out of the cold and wet history.
> Looking up at the sky,
> I seem to perceive
> A castrated dragon coming in the clouds,
> But I lose the direction of the sole walker in the rain. (193-198)

The "cold and wet history," like the "changed" "countenance of Cuiheng Village," depicts not just history itself but the reader of history. After a close reading, the speaker's mind is changed to be "cold and wet." This is implied first when the speaker takes a breath in order to prevent himself from sneezing; it is then implied also by the image of the "tattered umbrella," which must fail to protect the speaker from the downpour. He has to "rush out" of the history he "hastily enter[s]" lest he be soaked in the study and overwhelmed by the sense of helplessness.

The sense is what a historical self is obliged to withstand. "Looking up at the sky," the speaker seems to ask speechlessly a god above why history has turned "cold and wet."[15] The answer is "a castrated dragon coming in the clouds." On the realistic side, it is the murky clouds that are seen to take a dim and partial shape of a dragon. Symbolically, it signifies a consciousness of an overcast, mutilated China. As is well known, the dragon to the Chinese people is conventionally associated with prestige and divinity. The most obvious case is its being taken as a totem to represent Emperor and Empire. Contextualized in the poem, the dragon is hence related to the "non-political totem" and, accordingly, the Republic of China and its founder, Dr. Sun. A "castrated dragon" suggests that the Republic of China is split and the doctor's ideal rendered "simplified" and unproductive. And since the sky, like Hugh Ruppersburg's interpretation of the wilderness in Warren's "Brothers to Dragons," is "a blank space" "with no inherent meaning of its own" (52), the very shape of the clouds is actually projected from the speaker's consciousness of an impotent China. Truly, the dragon carries a message of the speaker's vain wish for variation and wholeness, of his knowing that he can do nothing to reinstate the Republic.

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[15] To Chinese readers, the gesture of "Looking up at the sky" could be associated with the looker's articulated or silent lament about humanity, misfortune, or punishment when the looker is rendered so helpless as to

The emotional entanglement with the narrative of history also plunges the self into a sense of emptiness, or, "desolation," in Luo Fu's own word. For a moment, the speaker is carried away by an expanse of

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question divine justice in relation to human sufferings. In fact, Luo Fu employs the Chinese character 天 which not only denotes "sky" or "heavens" but also connotes "god" or "divinity."

cloudy heaven. Coming back to himself, he notices that the dragon above has led him to "lose the direction of the sole walker in the rain." The belated discovery retraces a double movement in opposite direction. At the sight of the "castrated dragon," the speaker is recalling, thinking backwards about, the divided Republic; turning away from the history, he senses the loss of way and comes to remember what was recollected just now. His sightseeing trip, in fact, is also a journey moving to and fro across time and between history and self. Together with his momentary immersion in the undercurrent of history discussed above, the movement exemplifies again the fusion of the personal and political experiences as well as the tension between the past and the present. The speaker's visit is, indeed, a border-crossing activity that goes through the space and time the poet has experienced as a historical self. He helps define the poet's image of a Chinese returning native's emotional response to the re-established civilian contacts in the late 80s.

The historical self, in this respect, is unveiled in the speaker's sharing the poet's vision of Chinese history in the end. When the speaker loses direction, he finds simultaneously "the sole walker in the rain." The concurrence is important to the full revelation of the identity. In the poem, history is spatialized. It is metaphorically a passage for the speaker to "enter" and "rush out;" the narrative of it is displayed in the village, the memorial, the residence, and finally, in the "cold and wet" rain. The loss of direction is hence more than a loss of way. It is more even than a symbolic loss of mind. It signals the loss of the self in history and is a result of the self's becoming aware of its chilliness. The walker thus proves to be no one but the speaker himself. A deep concern with the National Father's lost ideals has doomed the speaker at least to loneliness, if not alienation. Helpless and alone, the speaker takes sight on himself as someone isolated in history. Concluding the poem in this way, Luo Fu makes it clear that being "a sole walker in the rain," the speaker becomes the historical self whose vision is soaked with coldness. Finally, it is the speaker's vision, but, more, the poet's review of the historical self's vision of the disabled China he narrates in the poem, that creates a border subject afflicted with its national history of emasculation.

Could the lost self find a way out of history? The speaker in "God" finds "a way to love God" in skepticism; while the speaker in "Union" finds a way to live through the commercial world in inertia. In what kind of state should the speaker in "Totem" be situated? In short, what kind of Chinese identity is anticipated by the speaker's stance at the end of the poem? The question could be answered by a brief discussion of the ending itself. Interestingly, the speaker's rushing out and, consequently, his finishing the reading of history correspond to the poem's coming to an end. In this view, he arrives at an end of narrative and so loses his way. There is no way out of the narrative that ceases to exist. The historical self thus is defined and also confined within the narrative of the poem itself. It is, first of all, a Chinese enclosed and lost in history. The poetic question arises: does Luo Fu simply draw upon the prenarrative to portray in the end a lost self?

The self is inflicted but not overwhelmed by history; he "rush[es] out." Actually, Luo Fu does not bring "Totem" to a full stop. The loss of direction points to a possibility of treading into another way ahead. The speaker thus ends up with another narrative of history. In a sense, history becomes the self's way. The ending of the poem thus paves the way for the beginning of a new course. This accounts for what Luo Fu says in the foreword: "In recent years, Chinese on both side of Taiwan Strait have the epoch-making opportunity in hand" (86). Chinese identity, as it were, would be revealed at the end of one historical epoch, and at the dawn of another. Indeed, it is on the way to change and is, in fact, always changeable. "Identity," Kerby remarks, "must be redefined within the context of the person's appearance within the sociolinguistic arena" (114). The way of change is included in the reality changed. The speaker's return to the arena in Taiwan and his stance in it will engender another transformation of identity. The coming identity of the lost Chinese thus belongs to the history of the Republic in the future. Tenuously, Luo Fu sketches his own political totem on the last page of his poem.

Chapter Two

The Exiled Self:

A Study of Luo Men's "Time and Space Sonata—Viewing Canton-Kowloon Railway from a Distance"

I

Whereas Luo Fu's "The Non-Political Totem" depicts the historical self in its return to Mainland China, Luo Men's "Time and Space Sonata" portrays the exiled self through its consciousness of the imposed separation from the Mainland. Exploring the sense of estrangement, the narrative of "Sonata" interrogates the shifting relationship between individual and national identities. The emergence and recurrence of the self's exile are underlined by the political transformation of Chinese subjectivity. The result is an exiled self conditioned and produced by the latent narrative, or, the prenarrative, of the plight of an uprooted people. The destiny of the exile thus interacts with the tragic fate of China in Republican era.

The prenarrative of China at war and the subsequent (dis)location of Chinese people in Taiwan is a story that has already started before the poem is composed. Through the speaker's recollection and expectation, the reader is reminded of the exile's obsessions and confusions deriving from his complex of Chinese/Taiwanese identity.

Hence, the continuous disruption of time and space that occasions this complex pervades the imagery of "Sonata." Space, the locus of nostalgia and estrangement, is dwelt upon to illuminate the exile's oscillation between "here" and "there," Taiwan and the Mainland. Likewise, time, the spatialized duration of memory, is referred back to capture the exile's movement between "now" at a border and "then" in Taipei. "Time and space sonata," in a word, recurs throughout the poem and provides an underlying, structural coherence to the exile's condition of being in between.

Situated midway between being a Taiwanese and being a Chinese, the speaker's complex betrays the self at precisely that historical moment when it has been forced to take on a transformed identity on the island foreign to it. The inevitability of change is predicated on a political borderline generated by an unnatural separation from the homeland. More broadly, Luo Men's relating the complex to the speaker's entrapment in modern Taipei has come to touch on "the experience of difference and estrangement in society" (Goldman 108). The borderline separating the speaker from the Mainland thus is drawn upon to define not only the exile's desire for return but also an aspect of what is human in all of us—the urge to go beyond the confines of locality.

Therefore, there permeates the constant readiness to go over immediately to another locality outside reality. To spell out the state of transgression in "Sonata," Elizabeth Bishop's remarkable poems, "Over

2,000 Illustrations and a Complete Concordance" and "Questions of Travel," will be interpreted. The two poems exemplify Bishop's essential concern noticed by David Kalstone: "Exile and travel are at the heart of her poems from the very start—and sometimes . . . a true counter to loss" (63). In "Over" and "Travel," the dialectic of movement and rest always ends in the impulse toward transition. What falls away in life is overbalanced by the speaker's "work against resistance and boundaries" (McCabe xx). Instead of stasis and domesticity, traveling and foreignness decide the condition of placement in the poems. Similar to "Sonata," the two poems are imbued with a need to pass over a border. Yet, unlike "Sonata," which calls for crossing in order to return to the familiarized, Bishop's poems do so primarily for the sake of entering the possible and the unknown. In "Over," the desire for travel, be it vicarious or real, is tested and claimed to be more essential than that for a family. In "Travel," on the contrary, "the opposition between inward and outward life" (Travisano 114) is unraveled with an acknowledgement of the contingency of home. What is a lack for the speaker in "Sonata" is a desire for the speakers in "Over" and "Travel." In Bishop's poems, displacement is chosen voluntarily and settlement evaded. Because the speakers are constantly out there, away from home, Bishop dwells paradoxically on the inevitability of exile as Luo Men does.

For different reasons, the self that emerges in the narratives of Luo Men's and Bishop's poems is destined to depart from certitudes of space and continuity in time. The self is "disunified" (McCabe xvi). Its being is dispersed into the horizon of geographical and temporal borders. The unstable self in Bishop thus will help to explicate the exiled identity in "Sonata." In the following sections, emphasis will be placed on the constitution of the exiled self upon the speaker's literary and metaphorical crossing. In short, this chapter will be concerned with the exiled self's inability to remain at rest in its being here and now.

II

"Sonata" is composed of three numbered sections: "1. Only two hops in the triple jump," "2. Gazing more than thirty years," and "3. A line through the pupils of God." The numbering implies a corresponding thematic progression to the poem. The first section articulates the voice of "I," the viewer, whose gaze is in transit as it hunts over the railway stretching into the forbidden border. The doomed desire for physical transgression anticipates the tragic confrontation with an inner gulf occurring in the viewer's memory of "he," the old seller in the second section. Placed in the context of the first person narrative, the voice of "he" tends to fade into a plane of past experience. Back from the experience, the voice is then redefined as a variable echo to the nostalgia of "I." The longing for return stimulates eventually an apostrophe to the mother country in the final section. Here, the merged addressing of the viewer and the seller brings about a visionary transfiguration of the natural and literary landscapes into a house of retreat. Fulfilled only in imagination, the return will never be complete or substantiated any more than the self condemned to displacement. "Sonata" thus gives expression to the restless wandering inflicted upon an exile.

The tendency for breakout is introduced in the beginning lines of "Sonata":

> All the world
> Stops breathing
>   At the starting line. (1-3)[1]

The indention in the third line creates a blank similar to the pause before a breathtaking venture beyond the borderline. Soon, "here" and "now" will be left behind by a dash for difference. The rupture with the certitudes upon which the present time and space are grounded is furthered in the succeeding stanza:

> Before the train comes,
> The eyes have begun to run.
> Jumping over the first and the second mountains,
> And bumping into the third one,

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[1] Luo Men's "Sonata" is quoted from his *All the World Stops Breathing at the Starting Line* 34-47.

They suspend in the air, unable to come down. (4-8)

The floating viewpoint spots a mountainous region the running eyes reach. Apparently, the personified eyes intend to race the train to the place over the mountains. The eyes' stealing a glance at the mountains imply the viewer's anxious impatience to wait any longer for crossing. Thus "before the train comes," his eyes have "run away from the socket towards where the mind goes" (Lin Yaode, *On Luo Men* 51). The stealing, moreover, smacks of prohibition. In the third mountain, the eye traversing is obstructed. According to Luo Men's note, "it's because the third mountain is covered by the barbed wire of Mainland China" (*All the World* 34). Down there, the mountain sits across a space of exclusion. "The barbed wire" that signals the dichotomy of the inside and the outside shrouds a political frontier. "Unable to come down," the eyes suspended in the air articulate the viewer's confrontation with a dilemma. He longs to enter the boundary that will, however, deprive him of freedom. The suspension thus dramatizes at once hesitation and rejection. The viewer hesitates because he is aware of the predetermined rejection. In times of separation, "only two hops in the triple jump" can be completed. The exile cannot but be an outsider, still searching for a foothold.

The helpless confrontation appears more clearly when the viewer's eyesight is seen to wander in the middle:

Looking forwards,   the vast expanse of clouds;
Looking backwards,   Kowloon has taken the train,
                                        Escaping to the border,
Looking me backwards to Taipei,
        To the windows of Taishun Street.   (9-13)

The spacing of the lines here gives a specific form to the viewer's drifting. The blanks in the first two lines, for example, signify the emotional emptiness of the viewer caught at the crossroads of the present and the absent. What lies ahead for him is clouded and far-reaching; what moves at the back of him, the train launching for the border. The viewer vacillates. His look hovers in an intermediate zone between the tangible railroad and the intangible vastness. The syntactic balancing of the concrete and the abstract, moreover, designates the zone as that of physical world intersected with inner reality. His inner hope and fear to overcome the remoteness ahead is overlapped with his doubt to return to the actual world, where his eyesight projects to and fro.

Thus the train runs over his eyes. Now it is he that is left behind by the train he races away from at the beginning. The train is "escaping" to the border, approaching the acres of barbed wire. Heading for the desired destination, the train demonstrates the viewer's locality and complex of transgression. For the train shuttling on the railway connects Canton located in the Mainland and Kowloon in Hong Kong. The train bound for the border is taking the direction the viewer longs, and yet fails to take because of the political reality in his time. Indeed, the viewer's position is in Hong Kong, geographically near to, but politically far from, the Mainland. Together with "the dual co-ordinates of near and far" (Papastergiadis 14), the appearance of "Taipei" next to "escaping" involves Taiwan in the incongruity and designates Hong Kong as the "interstitial space" (Henderson, "Introduction" 5).[2]

For many mainlanders in Taiwan,[3] Hong Kong was once a "secret" tunnel to get access to the Mainland.[4] The train's "escaping" thus reflects the viewer's feeling that his optical projection toward the border is sinuous and outlawed. Within sight but beyond reach, the Mainland viewed from Hong Kong is after all unattainable. The physical access is subject to the interdict enacted by Taiwan. To be in the Mainland thus is equal to a violation of, and, hence, an escape from, the domination of

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[2] Mae G. Henderson uses this term to expand on Abdul JanMohamed's concept of border crossing between inside and outside especially in respect of culture.

[3] The mainlanders in the dissertation refer to those who retreat to Taiwan around 1949.

[4] This, of course, ceased to be so when the communication between Taiwan and the Mainland resumed at a civilian level in 1987. Since then, Hong Kong has been legitimately recognized as one of the buffers for the two different political states even after it was taken over by the Mainland in 1997.

Taiwan. Eventually, it is this contested existence of Taiwan and the Mainland that arrests the viewer's intention of escape. Instead of stepping forward to Canton, the viewer's mind retreats, first, to the "interstitial space" and, then, turns back to "the windows of Taishun Street" in Taipei.

The change of setting marks a shift in the viewer's thoughts. He is locating himself within a specific place, in a room with "windows" for further looking and searching. That is, downscaled to an enclosed frame, the setting at the front of a house becomes an interiority enabling the viewer to stand outside the scene as an observer. Yet, observation, however passive, is still an act of engagement of the mind. To some extent, therefore, the image of the "windows" mirrors the viewer's imprisonment in his desperate yearning to transgress his geographical, temporal, and political confines. Truly, the viewer's obsession with somewhere over there is typical of the exile's movements in the spatial-temporal world. In the first section of the poem, there is an unmistakable motif of journey along the axes of time and space. The viewer's gaze at the railway makes his thoughts metaphorically a train between expectation and recollection. Concealed in the forward look is the nostalgic desire for what has been. The backward look, again, is motivated by the aim to realize the desire. The eyes hung in the air chase the future and the past into the very seconds of the present. The viewer's "now," so to speak, is widely spaced across different points and simultaneously diluted and divided. It is emptied out by his concern over nostalgia. As a result, his time is split.

Discussing the self's identity, Kerby quotes Merleau-Ponty: "'We must understand time as subject and the subject as time. . . . Time is *someone*'" (19).[5] Being is existentially temporal. The split time is equivalent of just how split the viewer's identity is. Elsewhere, Kerby himself also remarks that "identity implies a certain continuity over time" (6). Disrupted time, in contrast, manifests a non-identity, or rather, an identity of discontinuity. The viewer's self is hence that of an exile constantly fluctuating with the ruptured temporality. The exiled self, finally, is as fragmented as the disjointed places he preoccupies with imagination. Simultaneously in consciousness, there are the Mainland across the mountains, Hong Kong under the foot, Taiwan outside the windows, and the three countered and anachronous to one another.

In Bishop's "Over," there pervade also the images of intertwined "misses, departures and arrivals" (McCabe xv) as the speaker's eyes travel along the pages of an engraved Bible and the places in recollection and vision. Her speaker is also the self that is "unstable, fragmented, and soluble" (McCabe xii) in exile. Similarly, the self is confronted with a desire for breaking through a boundary. Whereas in Luo Men, however, the self's attempt to cross over results from an imposed displacement, in Bishop it is from a willful act that intimates the possibility of choices. The viewer's breakthrough is projected toward familiarity in the past, while the traveler's is toward unfamiliarity in the future. One looks forward to rediscovery and the other to exploration.

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[5] See M. Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* 422.

Thus to the traveler in Bishop, the "Seven Wonders of the World are tired / and a touch familiar, but the other scenes, / innumerable, though equally sad and still / are foreign . . ." (3-6).[6] The capitalized "Wonders" are the scenes the tourist acknowledge, frequent, and domesticate. The familiarized is surrounded, appropriated, and enclosed within a "home-made" boundary. Read in this light, the traveler's preference for "the *other* scenes" (emphasis added) bespeaks her attraction to the outside and alteration. Instead of inhabiting the boundary, the traveler sets out to delve into foreignness that resists assimilation and conclusion as much as real wonder does.

This becomes more obvious as the poem continues:

> Granted a page alone or a page made up
> of several scenes arranged in cattycornered rectangles
> or circles set on stippled gray,
> granted a grim lunette,
> caught in the toils of an initial letter,
> when dwelt upon, they all resolve themselves. (20-25)

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[6] "Over" is quoted from Bishop's *The Complete Poems* 57-59.

The traveler's eyes skim over the pages that are illustrated with such images as "rectangles," "circles," "lunette," and "an initial letter." The shapes of the images—square, round, and oval—circumscribe a perimeter of security. Modified by adjectives connoting negative meaning, however, the images spell want and confinement too. They are dotted with intrigue as suggested by "cattycornered," "stippled," and "grim." "When dwelt upon," the "scenes" bearing these images are found to be deceptively secured and, as such, bound to exposure. On the one hand, therefore, there is the force of constraint; on the other, a counter to it by virtue of mindful insight. The "scenes" "resolve themselves" not only in the sense of breaking down into blurred nothing because they are focused too long. They are also resolved by the traveler's resolution to glance beyond the "arranged" page of captivity. Again, the traveler disowns the boundary of familiarity.

The traveler's understanding of familiarity anticipates her exile over time and space. After an optical taste of the Bible's illustrations, the traveler is first immersed in her past travels and then in a vision of "Nativity." As Thomas J. Travisano points out, "Over" is composed of "three movements" (115): examination, recollection, and vision. The structure bears significance to the traveler's need to move on continually. Since what lies at home signifies confinement to her, the traveler is obliged to look another way, if not to go out. Even though she stays in site, her eyes turn aside either to study the travels she made before or to invoke a space at hand. Something outside must be ushered in to feed on the self's need for foreignness. Memory and prospect are thus conjoined to occupy the present moment. The present is haunted. Fragments of scenes arrive and depart here and, as a result, "everything [is] only connected by 'and' and 'and'" (65). The transitions and conjunctions never reach a completion as the first part of the title—"Over 2,000 Illustrations"—also suggests.[7] No more definite connections among the experienced, the recalled, and the imagined are sufficient. Time is dissolved. Accordingly, the self is dispersed and its identity, "soluble."

Because the exiled self can hardly settle in the present, the same becomes true for its identity. The viewer in Luo Men and the traveler in Bishop always drift away and become unanchored in the turbulence of space and time. Yet, the similarity between the two is also the converged point from which the two are set apart. Their confrontations with the turbulence aim in different directions. As mentioned earlier, the viewer's attempt to pass over the border is prompted by looking toward the familiarized in the past. The traveler's attempt, by contrast, is spurred by her pursuit of foreignness in the future. The sense of familiarity that one longs for is rejected by the other. It turns out that their displacement differs more in the ground they step on than in the destination they head for. In fact, it is due to their approach to home, the center of familiarity and intimacy, that they embark on different destinies. In their poems, therefore, the exile is situated and defined against the "fixity of home" (Papastergiadis 93).

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[7] For this interpretation, see Susan McCabe's comment: "We may want to find, she [Bishop] implies, ultimate concord, but nothing is ever complete or tallied inalterably as the first half of her exuberant title ('Over 2,000 Illustrations') indicates." *Elizabeth Bishop: Her Poetics of Loss* 133.

III

"The certitude of home," Nikos Papastergiadis states, "is the hope of assigning an incontestable identity to the self and its relationship with all others" (170). By analogy, the yearning for home evidences an anxiety, conscious or unconscious, over the self's ever being able to render its identity and communion in a static mode. The self's anxiety is well revealed in the second section of "Sonata," which opens in a low reflective tone:

> That old flower-pot seller
> Still gazes at the old home,
> Its flowers and soil,
> At the opening of the street. (14-17)

The gaze speaks. It communicates a perception of double-consciousness, of "looking at one's self through the eyes of the other" (Goldman 115). The viewer is gazing at the seller's gaze that discloses in turn his own anxious obsession with the absence of "the old home."

First, the implicit speaker recalls the experience of someone else from his own point of view. Then, the "opening of the street" echoes the "windows of Taishun Street" appearing at the end of the first section. This narrative stance may be seen at once as a complication and expansion of the viewer's exile. Down in the recess of the other's mind, the viewer mourns his condemned exile through altering into empathy with someone who shares the same look for the "certitude of home." Empathy thus serves as the underground refuge of exile; it is a striving for releasing the exiled self from the external and the emotional space. Paradoxically, empathy also accelerates the self's flight into total isolation. Looking into the gaze of his double, the viewer retreats actually into the state in which all he is left with is himself and his own memory.

"While locating the self within the familiar," Smaro Kamboureli remarks, "memory also marks the self's very displacement from the familiar territory" (160). The self's "remembrance of things past" ends only at intensifying its nostalgia for return and the brutal sense of separation. The seller's memory, for instance, carries him away to suffer the sense again:

> The glass buildings along the streets,
> Open rows of rows of
> Bright nostalgia.
> In the giant shadows of the buildings

His childhood is seated under the big banyan tree. (18-22)

Memory allows the seller to encounter his childhood. For a moment, he is sent back to sit under the shade of the tree as before. Shadowed by the "giant" "glass buildings," however, the past image appears like an ephemeral mirage projected upon the overriding glass. The innocence, security, and contentment belonging to a child in natural world are framed by the urbanized world of grown-ups. On the two sides against which memory stands in transit is the idyllic and the sophisticated. For the seller, therefore, the twin forces that lead to recollection is between longing and promise. The dead could be called up and in. But they cannot survive a realistic touch. They have to be, and in fact, can only be, buried in memory. In a word, the longing for return to the past can never be promised, realistically. Memory, in the sense, shows the seller how he remains separated from his own dreams of what used to be.

Similarly, memory also separates the seller from the reality "along the streets." Having come from elsewhere, the seller exemplifies the exile who always carries with him a foreign past. "Past . . . can be grasped," Kerby states, "precisely because it is still more or less operative horizon of the present; it is the context within which the present . . . becomes meaningful . . ." (22). The seller's nostalgia betrays his seeing the present against the background of the past. Thus "the glass buildings" are perceived from the shade rooted in the childhood. The shade presents a space that is natural and pleasing. Seen from this standpoint, the buildings are oppressive. The juxtaposition of the seller's impression on the present with the contradictory memory of his past foreshadows his estrangement from where he is. Thus in the second stanza we read: "His tired eyesight / Can only drag back home / The old cattle in the dusky rice field, / Unable to move the scenery of the prosperous streets" (43-46). The city flourishes at a brisk pace, while the seller ages and lags behind. Despite living in modern Taipei, he still houses his self elsewhere within an agrarian field.

In fact, the seller's estrangement enacts a critique of the urban life against nature. For Luo Men, there are three kinds of nature.[8] The first connotes "a pastoral existential environment," the second, "the urban environment that is expanded on a highly-technological, material civilization" (Luo Men, "My Poetics" 5), and the third, the inner environment which is based on the poet's creativity and whose ontology is beauty.[9] Through the seller's viewpoint, Luo Men contrasts the first two and expresses his subdued criticism of the second. According to Zhang Hanliang, human eyes are often employed by Luo Men to

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[8] Luo Men names them as the first nature, the second nature, and the third nature. For a detailed description of nature in Luo Men, see Luo Men's own account in "My Poetics" 5-8. For its explication, see Zhang Hanliang's "Analysis" 23-24.

[9] The third appears in the later part of "Sonata" and will be drawn upon in the fifth section of the chapter.

"intermediate, participate in, and interpret the opposing relation between the two kinds of nature" ("Urban Poetry" 175). This is evidenced by the seller's view of "the giant shadows" and his "tired eyesight." Apparently, the shadows are cast by the "glass buildings," "the metonymy of the second nature" (Zhang Hanliang, "Urban Poetry" 175). All surface and no haven, the buildings embody a flat, sheer, and impersonal city that has pushed its residents to the cold edge of space. What is mirrored by the "glass buildings," to quote Zhang Hanliang, is "the alienation of human beings and the first nature" ("Urban Poetry" 175). The seller's "tired eyesight," so to speak, exposes the devastating power of urbanization.

Indeed, all the scenes in relation to the city in "Sonata" present a frustrated urbanite beleaguered by alienation and suppression. Diametrically different from the serene countryside, the city is ridden with relentless uproars:

> A row of skyscrapers stand in
> The resounding noise of laying the foundation pillars (49-50)

and with intimidating alarms:

> The sirens in the whole street
> Call forth chirping and whistling (69-70)

Just as seeing and hearing are vulnerable to the discomfiting prospects and noise, so the seller is helplessly trapped in the place he physically inhabits.

Contact with the city thus allows Luo Men to sympathize with the Chinese exile in Taiwan. The separation from the homeland does entail nostalgia for the familiar life there. But related to this exclusion is the new life that turns the nostalgia into an impediment to self-readjustment. Mourning for a lost territory, the exile fails to update the past according to his present existence. But the present is after all too unpleasant to be identified. The exile's pain of nostalgia thus is stirred not only by his wish to return to "the old home" in the past but also by his "regret for having gone to the wrong place" (Papastergiadis 166).

The chaotic impersonality of modern urban life makes difficult the exile's assimilation to the place he reaches. He remains distant from city life as much as it keeps remote from him. The exile has lost his country and failed to gain the city. In a way, his predicament is that of a modern man who has witnessed the disappearance of the simplicity of life. Thus, the evident particularity of the seller's nostalgia in Taipei signifies a common estrangement. More specifically, through the seller's eyesight traveling within zones of cultural difference between country and city lives, Luo Men has come to define exile not simply as banishment from and to a place but also as uncanniness felt within a place.

There reveals, hence, a border subject in "Sonata." On the one hand, the Chinese Taiwanese is, in some sense, neither a mainlander, having lost his mother country, nor a Taiwanese, having failed to identify himself with the lifestyle in Taipei. The exile is related to and alienated from both. He is most at home on the way to his imagined territory of familiarity. On the other hand, there is also the modern man who is rendered estranged from a sympathetic and stable space. Such an inherent displacement from nature provokes a yearning for a home other than the one resided in.[10] Home should and must be somewhere. The dreams of release are no less strong than the nostalgia for return. Inasmuch as home, both concrete and abstract, is unattainable and uninhabited, the self suffers a double exile in modern times. The absence of home thus enables the poet to construct an exiled self that is in permanent longing for what is missed.

The exile in Bishop is also confronted with a tremendous sense of loss. Unlike the exile in Luo Men, whose longing has to do with the loss of a symbolic protection provided by home, the exile in Bishop believes in the inadequacy of home and devotes herself to "the ardours of the unhomely [sic] life" (Papastergiadis 170). For the need to grasp the "ardours," the exile's gaze is always pointing up, looking far and forward to a new horizon. Before her feet set upon a land, her eyes have been carried away to another destination. The sense of loss arises not from the grief at the impossibility of ever living the past again. Rather, it derives from the anxiety of missing something inexplicable, both ahead and behind.

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[10] Unless indicated specifically, nature in the chapter is still designated as the natural landscape, or, the first nature in Luo Men's terms.

That is why the exile in Bishop is so sensitive to memory and travel. The scenes touched by the exile's eyesight are always presented to be "superimposed with things not there at all" (Harrison 149). The experience and imagination of travels in the past and future come to share the exile's attention at the present moment. The exile longs to probe beneath the surface and unearth startling images to discover the intensity of things. The travels lying ahead promise a chance for exploration. Exploration, according to Kalstone, is Bishop's "way of countering and encountering a lost world" (52). Even though the exile is immersed in her travels made before, she is simultaneously recalling the scenes and exploring their symbolic inferences. Only when she digs into the experience itself can she withstand its vanishing into oblivion.

In "Over," therefore, when the exile's present of reading a family Bible is interrupted finally by her remembering vision, she explores what comes to her very eye with a question mark:

> Why couldn't we have seen
> this old Nativity while we were at it?
> —the dark ajar, the rocks breaking with light,
> an undisturbed, unbreathing flame,
> colorless, sparkless, freely fed on straw,
> and, lulled within, a family with pets,

—and looked and looked our infant sight away. (68-74)

Many critics of Bishop have pointed out the "lost or missing family security" (McCabe 131) in the concluding lines.[11] Truly, there is an unmistakable miss here. But the point is that the absence emphasizes a wish not so much for securing as for relishing. Rather than family security, it is the relish for something else that is in demand. On close scrutiny, the picture displayed by these lines is static and almost transcendental. It remains "undisturbed, "unbreathing" and "colorless, sparkless," as if it were contrived by a miracle. Here is a world of permanence and seriousness that is by no means secular. Interestingly, "lulled within" such a picture is "a family with pets," which does not smell "holy" but rather "domestic" (Travisano 120). The question could thus be formulated like this: "Why couldn't we have seen" the intensity of the other world "while we were at" the worldly life enclosed within it? Or, if we could have relished divinity as condensed by the image of "old Nativity" within domesticity, the family life would be satisfying. The problem is that we couldn't because we were penned up by family security.

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[11] See, for example, Barbara Page's "Off-Beat Claves, Oblique Realities," 207, David Bromwich's "Elizabeth Bishop's Dream-Houses," 172-3, David Kalstone's *Becoming a Poet* 130, and Jerome Mazzaro's "The Poetics of Impediment," 32.

Thus in the end of the poem, the "old Nativity" has still not been disclosed fully for us: "looked and looked our infant sight away." It vanishes from our very eye. The pleasure, viewed in this way, can only be experienced where the "infant sight" veers off. That is, speechless wonder, or, difference, can be spotted only after we keep a distance from familiarity. Again, "Over" testifies to Bishop's unusual perception of home. Victoria Harrison is right to say that "even when there seems to be a home behind the word," the "family" in this case, "it is not a place to return to, a satisfactory terminus" (62). The exile will never be satisfied by homemade security. She "demands to see the inexplicable otherness of a world not ours" (Harrison 149). In short, her focus falls on what can be retrieved only as absent.

Because something else is always missed, the exile's travel and her search of homelessness continue. The exiled self in Bishop is constructed around a desired absence just as that in Luo Men. The difference, as already mentioned, lies in the self's commitment to travel. In Bishop's "Travel," the priority of traveling over staying at home is tacitly indicated. The first line of the opening stanza—"There are too many waterfalls here . . . "—is concluded in a way that seems to disadvantage travel: "But if the streams and clouds keep travelling, travelling, / the mountains look like the hulls of capsized ships, / slime-hung and barnacled" (10-12).[12] The danger of traveling is sensed when the mountain landscape perishes in the traveler's associating it with a shipwreck. Yet, through "a rhetoric of negativity" (Harrison 149), the third stanza discloses the traveler's feeling the "pity" that would come of not venturing away from home:

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[12] "Travel" is cited from Bishop's *The Complete Poems* 93-94.

> But surely it would have been a pity
> not to have seen the trees along this road,
> really exaggerated in their beauty,
> . . . .
> —not to have had to stop for gas and heard
> the sad, two-noted, wooden tune
> of disparate wooden clogs (30-32, 35-37).

Despite the safety of home, the traveler would rather take a risk to experience the shocks, surprises, and melancholy solitude of traveling.

Having explored traveling in antithesis to staying, "Travel" ends at "a cautious syntax of questions, with tentative answers in negative clauses" (Kalstone 65):

> *"Is it lack of imagination that makes us come*
> *to imagined places, not just stay at home?*
> *Or could Pascal have been not entirely right*
> *about just sitting quietly in one's room?*

Continent, city, country, society:
the choice is never wide and never free.
And here, or there . . . No. Should we have stayed at home,
wherever that may be?" (60-67)

The lines map out a new potential for expansion. In the end, there is no alternative to our wandering mind. No home can be true, apart from the one our mind creates; and in moving from place to place, we never end up with a real home to house the mind in motion. Susan McCabe's interpretation of these lines would be hard to improve on: "Ultimately, travel becomes not a choice between movement and stasis, imagination and direct experience: 'home' is an artificial construction, 'sitting quietly in one's room' does not end the activity of the mind" (167). To travel is just to continue what we have been already engaged in, to follow the mind drifting away from the constructed boundary. The "questions of travel," therefore, are not answered from within. Travel needs something beyond itself to give it meaning. This "something," for Bishop, is the state of homelessness. Hence, "the choice is never wide and never free." It is the human reality that "*wherever that* [home] *may be*," we have been departing from it.

As such, exile is not even a choice to make. It begins before the self becomes aware of it. The problem of exile is not that the self is destined for endless departures and arrivals but that it precedes the self's journey. As a result, neither foreignness nor familiarity longed for by the self in Bishop and Luo Men, respectively, is really measured by the distance the self travels. What is missed is already there, "in the unlocatability of the moment of departure and arrival" (Papastergiadis 6). Exile in this sense does not happen at the same time when the self is displaced, voluntarily or not. Instead, it is commensurate with the self's losing its firm sense of location. Be it at home or not, the self is exiled when it is displaced emotionally. In the following section, the paper will develop this idea by expounding upon the lines departing from the seller's memory of the Sino-Japanese war in "Sonata."

IV

Luo Men has long been noticed for his remarkable investigation of war experiences.[13] The lines treating the old seller's apprehension, for example, flow out uninterruptedly to meet the threatening shadow of war:

> One Wild-Wolf motorcycle imported from Japan
> At the sharp speed of samurai sword

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[13] Ever since his "Fort Mckinley," the war poem which won him the *Gold Metal of Philippine President Literary Prize* in 1967, Luo Men has been recognized by his exploring, in his own words, "the serious threat [of war] to human thoughts" and "[war as] the cause of the great predicament and tormenting tragedy of human existence." See "Preface," 39.

Stabs from Peace East Road down into
Peace West Road. (23-26)

Here, Luo Men plays over personification to capture the fatalistic impact of war upon the self. "Personification characters," James J. Paxson observes, "enjoy a metaphorical 'emergence' from the mind of the diminished actant or narrator" (95). In other words, human's mind is reified when the personified takes its place to perform speech or action. According to him, moreover, reification "constitutes the latent structure" (51) of personification and vice versa. In translating the Japanese motorcycle into a wolf-like man capable of stabbing a sword, the lines automatically dispersonify the mind that effects the association.[14] In this way, the vitality of the mind yields to the destructive motion of the motorcycle. Stated otherwise, the reality where the mind is currently aware of "Peace Road" is intruded by the reminiscence of the Sino-Japanese War; the old seller's mind at present is overshadowed by the war in the past. By personification, Luo Men submits the reality of peace to the memory of war, thereby presenting the haunted self in enforced exile.

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[14] In Paxon, dispersonification means reification, which interacts with personification. Personification simultaneously dispersonifies the human individual who renders personified conception, animals, and objects. See his *The Poetics of Personification* 51.

But why, instead of Chinese civil war, is it the Sino-Japanese War that is explicitly alluded to in the narrative? The first section of "Sonata" makes it clear that the viewer's "viewing Canton-Kowloon railway from a distance" is because of Communist take-over; and his looking backward at the windows in Taipei could be traced back to the retreat of the nationalist government to Taiwan. The self, so to speak, is displaced on account of the political conflicts between Taiwan and the Mainland. Yet, when it comes to a war, it is the Sino-Japanese war that is first recalled by the old seller. Along with the resistance against the Japanese invasion, the historical circumstances of the final retreat, the colonization of Taiwan by Japan in the past, and the endless affliction of war, one finds suppressed in the seller's recollection all traumatic complexes of nostalgia and exile.

In fact, the homeland evoked by memory is not always delightful and memorable. Immediately after the quoted lines come the lines depicting a horrible massacre: "Across memory. / A torrent of panic. / All the land fell to the blood" (27-29). The picture is in complete contrast with the one sketched by "the big banyan tree," "rice field," and "the water-playing childhood /   In the little pool" (78-79). Evidently, long before the civil war, the Mainland has ceased to be what it was once in the seller's childhood. It follows that nothing but the memory of the childhood is the real substitute of the seller's homeward destination. In the sense, the seller's nostalgia precedes his displacement. Hence, a question arises. The seller goes into exile in

Taiwan. But, to use Papastergiadis's words, "when and where does [the] exile begin?" (143). Is it upon arriving on the island, in separation from the Mainland, with the unsatisfied desire for the bygone youth, or at home?

When home becomes "no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived" (Papastergiadis 11), exile begins. Exile starts where a narrative of memorable living remains incomparable and inexpressible. Instead of being housed, the self feels disoriented when it stays at the same home that has been deformed so much. In dream and memory, nostalgia usually brings the self back as far as where its life at home is still memorable. Nostalgic for his childhood, the old seller longs to return to an irrecoverable and irreversible space and time. Thus before he arrives in Taiwan, he has already been estranged. The political displacement enhances rather than engenders his sense of estrangement. His tragedy is that his exile will not come to an end even he returns to the homeland. His homeland is forever "old," gone with the change of political climate and of temporality. The end comes only if he redefines time and space, creating a new home and moving out of the past.

Just as the severance is never expected, so the reconciliation to the severance is seldom successful. The old seller's obsessions with the past epitomize those of many veterans who retreat to Taiwan. The island is mostly regarded as somewhere between destiny and return. Even the "old home" can no longer be found in the land that has been swept by war, the memory of the homeland is still cherished as the simulacrum of reality. Memory becomes a defense base. The loss of the past and the expectation for the future return have formed a block against the building of a promising life in the present in Taiwan. It is hence significant that Luo Men should portray the exile as an "old flower-pot seller" on the riotous street:

> The sirens in the whole street
> Call forth chirping and whistling.
> He desires to fly, to jump.
> Tens of flower pots, looking here and there,
> Facing the sky,
> Want him to sit down quietly. (69-74)

In the opening stanza of the section, the seller is seen to gaze at the "flowers and soils" of the "old home." Read together with the quoted lines here, the "flower pots" could be taken metaphorically as the landmarks of his previous life in the homeland. Transplanted to the pot, the natural landscape condensed in the image of "flower' is held to protect the self from the urban city. In the sense, the pot is also the border the seller carves out from the Mainland. The border where he can relate back to his memorable days replaces the frontier of a battlefield. Trading the border of nostalgia for his living, the seller lives out his exile to the extreme of memory. Thus, he betrays his reliance on retrospection to face the lapse of time.

Only in memory can his childhood at home be restored. Memory both constructs and takes apart his identity. At times, memory brings into being an imaginative and carefree child who "loves to fly, to jump" as he now desperately does. At others, the chronological time is interrupted by the circuitous feature of memory and stops at an unwanted point. There, memory turns him to reexperience childhood loss and separation. In the end, he is obliged to come back and "sit down quietly" in reality. Indeed, memory "as the repository of the different stages of the self" (Kamboureli 160) reveals the self's manifold modes of being. The seller is at once the aging man and the young child. The identity of the seller in the present thus is never complete.

Neither is his sense of belonging ever undivided in relation to the place where he lives. To live again a part of life that is now lost, the seller grows his foregone self in the pot that smells the past "soils." Here is a self-enclosed world that bears the quality of near isolation. Yet, this world is almost, but not quite, severed because the images within are constantly impinged upon by those in the frustrating present. In fact, the seller houses himself in the familiar territory that is still exposed to the outside foreignness. Besides the disquietude of city, for instance, the lines record a vain attempt to transgress and return: "The sirens in the whole street / sound chirping and whistling." The translation of "sirens" into "chirping and whistling" reveal the seller's wish to be a bird capable of flying back to his homeland. Just as the sirens are mimicry of the bird sounds, however, the seller's wish could be nothing but a daydream. This is more obvious in the line, "tens of flower pots, looking here and there." The line is followed by the indention in front of the next line, "facing the sky." Thus the line with the "flower pots" proceeds only to be broken off with a long patch of blank. Implicitly, there is the space of nature struggling with the space of civilization. The flower, or rather, nature, held in the pot is looking upward to the sky that is nearly covered by the "skyscrapers." The "facing," therefore, expresses again the doomed desire for return. Rather than natural scenery, the reality of a concrete city stands up to be faced. After the "facing," moreover, the "flower pots" "want him to sit down quietly." This is a way to understate the seller's knowing that he is unable to subdue the reality of exile. His nostalgia ought to be suppressed. More than an utter stillness, the commanded silence articulates the absolute violence of separation in the present. The sounds of the street, so to speak, reverberate the violence of his inability to return.

Read in this way, the interfusing of sound and silence becomes "symbolic counterparts of the emotional oppositions" (Lin Julia C., *Essays* 57). The seller's longing for return vacillates between anticipation and desperation. The opposing dynamism of hope and fear, nostalgia and reality, is increasingly enforced by his awareness that he is aging and moving closer and closer to death. The following lines evidence the argument: "The night always requires him to sit in the bruise of memory / To see time . . . / Shrinking bit by bit" (99-101);

soon, he will "sleep until one day he won't wake up" (104). Besides being detached from the place of arrival, the sense of impending death, of still dragging on here and alone, eventually leads the exile to question the borderline that determines separation.

In the final section of "Sonata," before returning to a narrative of personal sorrow and loss, Luo Men relates the exile's own nostalgia to the common experience of separation. The excursion into other historical displacements gives greater scope to the exile's quest for an eternal homeland. Leaving behind revolution, banishment, and civil wars, the self maintains in exile his spiritual link with his mother country. The identification is not simply an attempt to transgress metaphorically the boundary into which the exile is abandoned. It is primarily activated out of the need to reconstitute identity on something familiar and integral. In this regard, the apostrophe of the "I" to the mother and mother country in this section is especially significant. It functions as the exile's search for the site of a lost territory that will help to prevent the self from further disintegration. The remaining parts of the chapter will discuss how the speaker embarks onto the "self-agonizing quest for a cohesive center" (Ye Weilian, "Introductory" 13) in nature and literature.

V

The third section of "Sonata" begins with the speaker's thinking of an extensive borderline: "This line from Panmunjom / Circling East-

West Germany Corridor / Arrives here" (116-118). Then, shortly after the speaker's concluding remark on the impotence of religious sympathy to imposed separation—"Once the line gazes into the horizon / God will think of home too" (123-124)—there comes the speaker's questions of loss: "Along it, / Mother,   where is your hand that held the stitching needle? / Where is my childhood that snapped away with the kite?" (127-129). In the questions, the borderline is tacitly transformed into the thread for sewing and flying a kite. Obviously, the hand is the metonymy of the mother. The protective warmth the mother gives to the child is probably remembered as a homemade cloth embroidered in neat chains of stitches. The kite, then, is the metaphor of childhood. Like "chirping and whistling" birds, the kite is associated with a flight across the open sky. This image captures, therefore, the child's joyful and close affinity to nature. Now, put into questions, all the happiness experienced in the childhood is gone. Like the kite which "snapped away" to the ground, the speaker has gone through a fall, in which the certitudes symbolically knitted by the mother's hand spin away.

The apostrophe delivered in questions hence is an answer to the speaker's quest for something that is no longer present. The quest, to borrow Kamboureli's words, "functions as a metonymy of desire" (57). It intimates the speaker's desire for a future that can recover the lost past at the moment he lives right now. As such, the whereabouts of the hand and the kite are underlined by a suppressed awareness of the "incompleteness of the present" (Kamboureli 57). Since the present is the time and space encountered in exile, it is the exiled self that is truly negated in the questions. Strictly speaking, it is against this exiled self as a result of a sudden displacement that the apostrophe is invoked.

The apostrophe thus articulates an attempt to rely on the motherland to constitute the self anew. In the lines coming later, "Mother" gradually gives way to "Mother country" that is manifested in nature. The repetitions of certain expressions and the apostrophes enable Luo Men to accomplish a sense of continuity in the speaker's attempt. The "line," transformed from a borderline to the thread for stitching and flying a kite, becomes a "brush stroke" that can be "activated to the movement of the Yangtze River, / Calmed down to the stillness of the Great Wall" (138-139), and eventually "flush away all the barbed wire and bombshells" (143). After everything that produces borders, boundaries, and exclusions is obliterated by the power of nature, "Mother country, you will swim here in the sunshine of the south / And ski away in the snow of the north" (144-145). The speaker's apostrophe is pronounced in the hope that the Mother country will progress as naturally as the cycle of the seasons. Nevertheless, introduced by the subordinate conjunction, "if" (136), the apostrophe discloses instead an untold, contradictory reality, of enforced regression, that stands in opposition to the hope.

Together with "the barbed wire and bombshells," the apostrophe expresses the speaker's turning to nature for refuge. Like many speakers in Tang poems about nature, Luo Men's speaker filters into nature the self's private vision of withdrawal.[15] Nature is approached as a vital and supreme space that can protect the self from a hideous, external reality. For the exile, nature is a universal country, a spatialization of a relationship that always appears as openness. As opposed to human reality, nature promises a harmonious bound without hostile borderlines. The case here is the speaker's ardent invitation to "Mother country":

> Then,   open the great tea table of the green field,
>   Hold the big china teapot of the blue sky,
>   Stay not in the small teahouse,
> Drinking from "**The Yellow River flows on into the sea**"
> To "**The distant shape of the lonely sail melts into the hollow blue**";
> Drinking from "**The moon rushes into the flux of the Great River**"
> To the "**The boat crosses alone in the wild unmanned ferry.**"
> (146-152)

Unquestioningly, the landscape highlighted by the images is as vast and open as it could be. By comparison, the viewer, invisible and yet present in the watery and airy spectacles, is extremely tiny and secluded. Here, within the picture captured by the lines in bold type, conceals the focusing eyesight that first spots the wild expanse of juxtaposed scenes, zooms in on a particular object, and then witnesses the movement of the object receding gradually into the distance. The subject observes the object without interfering with its natural order. The visual perception thus encompasses at least the "coexisting, coextensive emergence" (Ye Weilian, *Diffusions* 47) among natural objects and a harmonious relationship between nature as a whole and the self viewing it from a distance. The emergence diffuses distance and boundary. There is no definite point, for example, to distinguish the "moon" from the "River" or the "River" from the "sea" when the two vibrate and reflect each other. The relationship, then, eliminates any unnatural plunge; the "sail" and the "boat" submit either to the "hollow blue" or to the flow of water. In light of the perception, any artificially imposed order is overturned. The invitation hence springs from a wish to reach out to a spacious openness into which the self can be totally immersed.

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[15] Of the Tang poets taking nature as the resource of solace, Wang Wei, Meng Haoran, and Chu Kuangxi are the most familiar to Chinese readers.

It follows that the mother country is invited to establish intimate contact with the exile. The contact, however, is put into brackets and excluded from reality. Notice that all the bold lines are cited from Chinese classical poems in the Tang Dynasty.[16] In this way, the poet symbolically situates the exile in remote space and time by conceiving of the landscape in poetic terms. The wish, so to speak, is first of all possible only where a historical disjuncture exists. It cannot be actualized here and now. Put another way, it is the natural aspect of the mother country that the exile comes to recognize now. Besides, the wish is expressed in the language of poetry—and only there. It is nothing but a poetic truth. It cannot be otherwise realized outside the field of literature. The only room for the wish is hence in language. Inasmuch as the wish is that of the self's final settling, language holds up the self's further exile. In this sense, language "is potentially the only human home, the only dwelling place that cannot be hostile to man" (Berger 95).

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[16] "The Yellow Rivers flows on into the sea" is cited from Wang Zihuan's "On the Stork Tower," "The distant shape of the lonely sail melts

Exile thus becomes a flight from reality to language. And this, interestingly, is spoken through the apostrophe to "Mother country." In other words, the poet employs the device of apostrophe to present yet another version of the exiled self. From the "border" tracked by the "train," along the "opening of the street" in Taipei, to the "line"

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into the hollow blue," from Li Bai's "Seeing Meng Haoran off at Yellow Crane Tower," "The moon rushes into the flux of the Great River," from Du Fu's "Nocturnal Reflections While Travelling," and "The boat crosses alone in the wild unmanned ferry," from Wei Yingwu's "On the West Stream at Chuzhuo." These lines are my translations based on *300 Tang Poems* edited by Xu Yuanchong. See Xu Yuanchong 14, 94, 176, and 248.

transformed finally to paint a natural landscape, the exile has come to sustain a voice most similar to the poet's own. In fact, apostrophe is autobiographically significant because it is invoked in the present time of the writer. Behind the verbal utterance from "I" to "you" is "a now of discourse, of writing" (Kamboureli 144). By apostrophe, the writer is written into the text to share the persona of "I." Accordingly, there is a configuration of identity in the lines led in by the speaker's invitation.

Although the lines are narrated in the first person, the point of view does not simply express one identity. The self is at once the viewer, the seller, whose voice is uttered in the first-person context, the speaker, whose voice unites the two, and above all, the poet. The poet's voice is predominant here. From "Mother" to "Mother country," the poet's voice has gradually come to vibrate with the speaker's. For the apostrophe here is projected towards a voiceless, inhuman entity. In explicating Jonathan Culler's view, Kamboureli states that when apostrophe is applied as "a sign of fiction" (143), that is, "when the *I* names as a *you* something that cannot possibly be *you* (i.e. the earth), the *I* 'preempts' the place of the *you* in a gesture of poetic intervention" (143).[17] In the apostrophe, "Mother country" cannot be the second person able to respond to the addressing. Instead, it is treated more like the third party that is being referred to at the poet's present of writing on exile. To address "Mother country" and so designate it as a "you," therefore, is to accentuate the poet's own intention.

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[17] For Culler's view, see his *The Pursuit of Signs* 146.

Stated further, the apostrophe renders as a textual place the poem itself that allows the poet to inhabit and involve himself in the invitation, continuing thus his own meditation on exile. Since the poet is an exile too,[18] the apostrophe that alludes to classical Chinese poetry on nature bespeaks the poet's attempt to house himself in his poem, or, the third nature created by poetic language.[19] Read in this way, the poet does not escape from the situation which occasions "Sonata." He does not present himself as detached from the lyrical world that is bracketed in the apostrophe. Instead, he shares the speaker's wish to escape into nature. Together with the poet's criticism on urbanity, or, the second nature in Luo Men, the speaker's wish expresses the poet's reliance on the first nature to create the third one that could be as harmonious as its model. The result is hence a poetic identity that is produced by superimposed exiles. All those who are exiles in the poem, the viewer, the seller, and the speaker, bear the destiny and attitude that are not only similar and congruent with one another but also correspond to those of the implied poet. In other words, the exiled self is constituted upon the accumulation of the various but consistent stances on exile.

In this view, the poet originates the self in the narrative that relates back to the prenarrative of the tragic fate of Chinese exile. "The self, as implied subject," Kerby remarks, "appears to be inseparable from the narrative or life story it constructs for itself or otherwise inherits" (6). This is especially true in the case of the poet who is also displaced and separated from his homeland. Up until 1987 when people in Taiwan were first allowed to contact the Mainland after the civil war, some of the mainlander poets have been inclined to take the writing of exile poems as a way to redeem their displacement. This often produces a speaking voice whose articulation of exile is identical to the poets' own. Consequently, the implied poets tend to get entangled within the situation that gives rise to their own poems.

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[18] Luo Men was born in Canton in 1928 and came to Taiwan after 1949 in his youth.

[19] See note 8.

In "Sonata," corresponding to the entanglement is the return of the viewer's gazes near the end of the poem:

> Unable to arrive,
> I can only look into the mind.
> Throwing more gazes,
> Why do I look back at this line again? (175-178)

Not inappropriately, this recurrence is itself linked to the inseparability of the self and the narrative. In fact, "unable to arrive" is another way to say "unable to leave." The lines preceding the quoted ones give evidence that the viewer hopes "the world will retreat / Into the mountain colors that change between being and nonbeing" (171-172).

An allusion to Wang Wei's "Floating on the Han River,"[20] the "mountain colors" sketch a world of serenity and seclusion in the same way as the poem does. The place the viewer wants to reach is the natural landscape that echoes the one previously presented in the apostrophe of invitation. There is a persistent continuity in the quest for belonging and, concomitantly, in the reality that stimulates the quest. The conflict between the quest and the reality is so violently posed that it uproots any possibility of arriving at satisfactory conclusion. Consequently, it is because the exile is unable to escape the reality of exile and so to quell the nostalgic longing that he is "unable to arrive."

The landscape, therefore, is enlivened by a hope for release; it derives from the "look into the mind" and is actually an inner landscape. In confronting the reality of displacement outside himself, the viewer turns inward as a last resort. Yet, the inner landscape turns to be nothing but an illusion. The comfort discovered in the mind is soon consumed as suggested by the helpless nostalgia underlying the question—"Why do I look back at this line again?" (178). The viewer's gaze is again fixed upon the border he wants to cross over: "It's the train heading for the border / Brings back again / Compartments of nostalgia" (175-181). Apparently, the viewer's attempt to escape from reality is doomed to frustration; his appealing to visionary moments of tranquility is weighed down by his permanent longing for return. "'Nostalgia'," writes Papastergiadis citing S. Stewart, "'is the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition and denies the repetition's capacity to form identity'" (149). Circling back to the "line," the gaze points out the viewer's ultimate submission to recurring nostalgia and, by implication, to the homeland that renounces any location other than itself. The exile in "Sonata," to conclude, is the self forever rebounding away from the present space and time in the search for the lost origin.

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[20] For the English translation of the poem, see Tony Barnstone, Willis Barnstone, and Xu Haixin 166.

In "Sonata," absence has, hence, allowed the poet to construct a self that keeps on looking for origin from the drifting point of exile. Because home is always missed, the self continues to be exiled. As with the days spent, the origin cannot be really restored. The tension between the remembered and the inaccessible thus remains unresolved, and indeed, cannot be terminated, in the end of the poem. The absence of home has been endured but never accepted. What no longer remains is hopelessly intertwined with the borderline that is beaten out by the sound of the running train: "The whole track / Lashes the sky, / Resounding / Fits of pain" (185-188). On the contrary, the absence of home is contrived and embraced in Bishop's poems. Indeed, the traveler "permanently left home, 'wherever that may be'" (Harrison 23). The dialectic of travel and stay is concluded with more trust to the state of homelessness. "Over" ends with recognition of new potential lying outside home; "Travel," with a compulsion to move outward. By comparison, the endless mourning in "Sonata" is grounded on the denial to homelessness. Hence, a paradox of exile is in Luo Men's poem. When does the displaced self truly leave his homeland? Never. The exile lives in it at every moment of his desire to be anyone but an exile. So long as it suffers its identity as an exile, the self takes the homeland as its standpoint and stops there. The exiled self in "Sonata" thus is the displaced Chinese who forever stays at home.

Chapter Three

The Lonely Self: A Study of Chen Kehua's "Portrait of Ladies"

I

Moving away from the historical circumstance of Chinese displacement, Chen Kehua's "Portrait of Ladies" dwells specifically on the indifference and estrangement of "Taipei Man."[1] For the poets of the postwar generation in Taiwan, the political separation may be just an image of some other mode of exile. In Chen's "Portrait," the evident particularity of separation is replaced with the constant of patriarchy that perpetuates the "binary hierarchy of masculine versus feminine" (Claridge 5). Accordingly, the sense of nostalgia here does not result from the political displacement, nor can it be resolved by returning to some spatial or historical origin. Instead, it results from the human relationship that has been contaminated by patriarchal assumptions. It is a kind of "spiritual nostalgia," one that is "still in quest for location" (Zhang Fenling 57). Throughout the poem, therefore, Chen concerns himself with an apparently inescapable state of mind: loneliness. He resituates the self's primal loss and emptiness in sexual terms. The possible and yet inherently disappointing solution of loneliness is presented through the interpersonal contact between the sexes. Constricted by the hierarchy, the contact accelerates only the flight into total isolation. The self is thus incomplete, often in want of the other, against which it is tempered to oppose itself. It needs whatever contradicts unrestrained sexuality, deviant femininity, and ubiquitous vanity it blindly asks for. Unlike "Totem" and "Sonata," where the constructed self is in search of an identity in the prenarrative of history or uprooting, the self in "Portrait" helplessly loses it in the prenarrative of patriarchy.

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[1] Since Bai Xianyong entitled one of his collections of short stories "Taipei Man," the term has been gradually specified in accordance with the

Patriarchy as an organizing principle of the poem is deeply imbedded in Chen's narrative of the portrait. Composed of five sequences, the poem discloses a male speaker's voicing of different aspects of female erotic experience in Taipei: coquetry, docility, sexual mockery, carnal indulgence, and fatal desire. As a consequence, the masculine gaze on the female body becomes an important site in which to look at the city. How does the speaker name the women, to borrow from Carol Watts's words, "as the corporeal other, immanent bearers of the bodily realm" (84)? How does he interpret the urban experience of sex? How is he acted upon by patriarchy that underlines his observation and that may well contradict his interpretation? The answers of the

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growing fame of the collection.

questions will help examine "the portrait of ladies" and, concomitantly, Taipei, the objective world in which both the viewer and the viewed are located. Femininity constructed by the male gaze thus manifests what Taipei looks like and vice versa. Since Taipei is the capital and hence representative of Taiwan, "women of Taipei"[2] possess a more extensive social dimension. The explicit sexual references are employed to demonstrate the degeneration that plagues the island's urbanites. In other words, the lonely self may come to designate not only "Taipei Man" but "Everyman" in the urbanity of Taiwan.

Not just the women but also the men are responsible for pervasive loneliness. This is well suggested by the double-voiced narrative. The speaker is heard to contemplate the difference between masculine and feminine sentiments, the separateness of male and female consciousness, instead of the mutual complementarity of these contraries. The implied poet's attitude toward "Taipei Man" is actually divided rather than integrated. Frequently, the male speaker's sarcastic tone falls heavily on the women that seem to deserve it totally. However, the speaker's words sound so assertive that they invite a reading of himself through femininity. Hence, the irony against the women is sometimes inverted. Chen allows the object of the male gaze to interrogate the gazer in the gazer's very affected narrative. The interaction of viewpoints, no matter how submerged the women's are, reveal gradually and tentatively a neutral poetic identity.

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[2] The term is quoted to refer to the first sequence of the poem, "Prologue:

The narrative of "Portrait," so to speak, works on the prenarrative of the separation between both sexes and toward the construction of the lonely self. Movements of perspectives govern the construction. In fact, the construction appears to be "the narrative equivalent of the dialectic tensions" (Kroeber 6-7) between the male utterance and the unspoken, female voice. In the poem, the interest thus lies not only in the portrait itself but also in the speaker's relation to it and in what the relation reveals about him and patriarchal discourse.

In the following sections of this chapter, the study of Chen's "Portrait" will hence focus on the "triad of man, woman, and patriarchy" (Claridge 13). To shed light on the "triad," the speaker's image of woman in the following poems will be compared briefly with that in Chen's "Portrait": Ezra Pound's "Portrait d'une Femme," William Carlos Williams's "Portrait of a Lady," and T. S. Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady." Similar to the speaker in Chen's poem, the speakers in the American poems treat women as either objects of desire or "empty ciphers" (Rosu 102). In Williams, the lady is associated with nature and relies on the man's "sounding of her depth" (Conrad 136). In Pound, she is a silent interlocutee bereaved of any "intersubjectivity" (Hamilton 65) with the speaker. In Eliot, her words are remembered simply for the man's rumination of his own anxiety and "indecisiveness" (Pinion 76). The

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Women of Taipei."

characteristic in common is an isolated self that is revealed in the relation between man and woman. The introverted gaze confines both the observer and the observed in its partial sight, unable to make the two cohere into mutual wholes.

II

The epigraph of Chen's "Portrait" provides a starting point for illustrating the isolated self:

> He thinks,
> "She is too obviously a lie."[3]

Apparently, the woman is accused of deceit and falsehood. Quietly enclosed within the man's thinking, the accusation meets no defense from the woman. Here is a direct speech enounced in such a certain and preemptory tone that tends to ignore, if not disallow, any possible argument from the woman. Like the words in quotation, the woman's view is shut in and rendered unheard. The speech bears forth the impression of one-sided verdict, of subjecting female voice to masculine consciousness. Locating his conclusion "within the sociolinguistic arena" (114), Kerby defines subjectivity "as the *possibility of expression*" (112). Given no chance to counter, the woman's subjectivity is hence disregarded and even erased.

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[3] Chen Kehua's "Portrait of Ladies" is translated from 1997 edition of

The woman in "Portrait" is seldom presented as a speaking subject.[4] Her feelings and thoughts are not expressed but analyzed. Throughout, there is a masculine gaze that observes, deduces, and concludes. Her view is mostly mediated by the male speaker's monologue. Indeed, the narrative of the poem deliberately avoids any conversation between man and woman. Denis Levertov, following Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, states that "communion is the very basis of . . . *living humanly*" (49). The absence of conversation in "Portrait" bespeaks an unnatural, strained relationship in "Taipei Man."

In the epigraph, "She is too obviously a lie" is not introduced by a reporting verb like "say" or "tell" but by "think," a verb of consciousness. The words in quotation marks are thus not spoken out but remembered at the moment of thinking. The speaker is recalling either the perception he himself forms or a conviction circulating among the others. Whether it derives originally from the speaker or not, the perception is summoned up secretly, without the woman's knowing. Implicitly, there has been a subdued tension between the man and the woman. Their relation seems to be based on dormant disguise. The woman lies to the man; the man conceals from her his knowing the truth. He is on the contrary suspicious of being not a lie too obvious but obscure enough to the woman. Woman is as much betraying as betrayed.

Remembrance of a Star 155-169.

This is characteristic of Chen's portrait in the poem. He is careful to balance the disapproving image of woman by exposing at the same time the inadequacy of man's perspective. Another feature implied by the epigraph is that the lie tells, to quote Victor J. Seidler, "not simply a matter of what men thought, but of who men are—of the masculinities that men learn to identify themselves with" (236). The speaker revealed here is the one who " '*live[s] within a lie*' " (Ash qtd. in Seidler 234). He may not accept the woman he believes to counterfeit reality. But by the very fact of his own concealment, he accepts his "life with and in it [the lie]" (Seidler 234). By so doing, he confirms the interchange of lies; he makes it, shares it, and is actually the accomplice of that errant femininity. As a result, the man is constituted by what he thinks he is not. The identified masculinity is more a counterpart than an opposite of the femininity under reproof.

The paradox deconstructs patriarchy in which a pervasive distinction of both femininity and masculinity is implicated. The double-edged criticism hidden in the epigraph is typical of Chen's way of exposing patriarchy from within. This becomes more conspicuous when the epigraph is read together with the title of the poem. The Chinese title, "Lie Nu Zhuan," could be literally translated as "Biographies of Virtuous Women" or "Biographies of Various Women."[5] In a phonetic play on the

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[4] Unless specified, "Portrait" refers to Chen's poem under discussion.

[5] Whether it is "virtuous" or "various" depends on the connotation of the

first Chinese character, "Lie,"[6] Chen connects the title with a trouble history of patriarchy. The poem alludes first of all to Chinese classical writings on the lives of virtuous women, which are thoroughly endorsed by patriarchy.[7] The narrative in such writings founds its whole system of

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first Chinese character 列. In Chinese literary language, the character in the sense of heroic devotion is interchangeable with its homonym, 烈; both of them are used to modify those women who give priority to their chastity over lives and are ready to sacrifice the latter when they are blackmailed. It is the character itself, however, that is mostly written together with the other two in the Chinese title to mean "biographies of virtuous women." In Chinese classical writings of orthodox history or poems, there contains, indeed, biographies or portraits of these kinds of women, which are underlined by social codes of patriarchy. Conventionally, the writings end at the woman's perseverance of remaining chaste and devoted in hideous and even fatal situations. Mostly, the woman is a widow, who never gets married again after the death of her husband, or a self-killer, who will commit suicide when her virginity or decency is threatened. In modern usage of Chinese language, the first character is often employed to mean variation rather than virtue. It is its homonym that connotes in modern time martyrdom. The Chinese title could therefore be translated also as "Biographies of Various Women."

[6] "Lie," when written as 列 as it is by Chen in the Chinese title, is associated with sort, list, rank, classification and variation; when written as 烈, with the four strokes at the bottom, connotes the sacrifice of oneself for a just cause.

[7] A similar writing in Western literary tradition may be Ovid's *Heroides*.

judgment on the "sexual propriety of women" (Leighton 356). According to the coded morality, woman's behavior is molded to authorize patriarchy. The conventional "portrait of ladies" is hence the stereotype of sacrifice and suppression.

Chen's poem is related to this convention in a variation that is implied by the very content of his narrative. Rather than biographical records of the virtuous women, Chen's narrative presents a sequential portrait of women who have apparently no conventional "virtues." They are, in fact, fallen women, vane, shallow, and sexually deviant. Still

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In this Latin poem, Ovid portrays a number of heroic women, most of them are left behind by their husbands or lovers because of war, death, or man's pursuits of glory. In this regard, the resultant predicaments these women suffer are not unlike those described in the Chinese works. However, Ovid does not mean to authorize male-centered ideology as these Chinese writers do. Besides, his focus, for the most part, is on the submissive power of love, which could be illustrated through the examples of women's involvement in illicit loves. In the Chinese writings, the focus is on the sanction of patriarchal dogma by highlighting, in particular, women's lifelong devotion to their husbands. For the views of Ovid's *Heroides*, see the section of "The *Heroides*" in Sara Mack's "Ovid's Love Poetry" 69-83. For the Chinese writings, see, for example, *Biographies of Virtuous Women* by Liu Xiang in the Han Dynasty, the section of "Biographies of Virtuous Women" in *History of Late-Han Dynasty* by Fan Ye in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, or the poem "A Virtuous Woman" by Meng Jiao in the mid-Tang Dynasty.

retaining the character "Zhuan," or, "biography" in English, Chen nevertheless imparts by the Chinese title a "central disposition" (Kerby 56) that is intrinsic to the narrative of various life experiences.[8] And this, to be sure, is the patriarchal structure on which the conventional portrait is based. Chen's "Portrait" is thus designed to reveal especially the modern woman as the Other, who destabilizes from within the structure rationalized by male reason. Namely, woman remains in the service of masculine desire and yet seductively falls away from the encoded conduct.

Disclosed in this way, female sexuality is able to undermine patriarchy, which subordinates it and has it as part of its structure. In the prologue of the poem, anxiety about losing control of femininity haunts over the speaker's consciousness. Because of their suggestive response against male aggression and helplessness, the opening stanzas of the prologue demand detailed discussion. The first lines are introduced in a tone that sounds weary of "eroticism":

> Putting an end to my erotic imagination of the whole street, I
> want to sleep.
> Oh, the country no longer for poetry—
> The literary Taipei. Women of Taipei. (1-3)

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[8] According to Kerby, "the biographer's art . . . has always been to 'reduce' diversity to a perhaps . . . central disposition . . . ." See his *Narrative*

Tinged with "erotic imagination," the street becomes a stage for sexual scenes. Either in a mental voyage or realistically in a night stroll, the speaker is finally tired of his erotic imagination. The first line here is deliberately prolonged. The slow progress of the subordinate phrase to reach the main clause emits an impression of intolerable dragging that corresponds to the speaker's weariness. The street, as it were, is situated on the terrain of desire that stretches out to exhaust its pedestrian.

The second line adds a lament to the speaker's lassitude, thereby imbuing his tone with a sense of resigned helplessness. This makes his "imaginative eroticism" less a transitory state of sexual arousal than an interminable reminder of his concern with the country. To lament immediately "the country no longer for poetry" is to name sexuality as a cause for the unpoetic country, Taiwan. How the street is sexually displayed symbolizes what Taiwan has become for the speaker. According to Antony Easthope, "poetry is always *a* poetic discourse, part of a social formation defined historically" (21). In this respect, poetry by its nature critically reveals particular historical moments. What poetry is is hence what the country now is not. Since "poetry," to quote Easthope again, "is specified by condensation of the signifier" (23), the country is on the contrary specified by an unbound play of signifiers. By analogy, Taiwan is thought to be infected by "casual sex or anonymous eroticism"

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and the Self 56.

(Lionnet 49). Put differently, indulgence in unrestrained sexuality is the unspoken term the speaker tactfully hides in his lament. Expanding on the views that poetry emphasizes the spare art of language and that it defies "both semantic and grammatical categorical interpretations" (Kerby 85), one can even visualize another picture in the speaker's lament. That is, indulgence performed through erotic body language is not exceptional but common and crude.

Indeed, Taiwan's moving toward spiritual decline is suggested through the unchecked eroticism in the street of Taipei. The street is a microcosm of urban Taiwan in its 1980s.[9] The speaker's association of poetry with country, moreover, confers poetic discourse a status to evaluate national identity on the island. In this way of reading, Chen's "Portrait" is itself a poetic investigation of the prenarrative it exemplifies. Hidden behind the lament is yet another suggestion: Woman is responsible for the indulgence and decline. The point is evidenced by the period setting "The literary Taipei" apart from "Women of Taipei." The full stop divides Taipei into two separate zones. Here is "the literary" and, accordingly, poetry and there, the women. The juxtaposition tends to contrast the women with poetry and as a result, to imply conflicts between the sexes. Unquestionably, the speaker aligns himself with poetry. In a sense, poetic or "literary" discourse is masculinized. Since the powerlessness of poetry in the country, or, conversely, the ineffectiveness of the country for upholding poetry, results from debased eroticism, the women on the other zone may stand for the destructive feminized sexuality. In this way, a male apprehension is exposed. The women exert their sexual power over "the literary Taipei." Considering the speaker's "put[ting] an end to" his "imaginative eroticism," the line reveals a phallic self's impotence to claim sole authorship for the national identity.

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[9] Chen had written "Portrait of Ladies" from 1983 to 1986. See his Preface. *Remembrance of a Star*, 9 and the title page of the poem in

For the identity has been acted upon by a disturbing change in femininity. In the lines that follow, male anxieties and aggression are projected into his image of the women:

> A queerly evolved species, a group of aliens whose attempts are
>   unknown,
> Are stealing into the old dragon race. Here and there
> They deform
> The original highly-displayed
> Totem of the dragon— (4-8)

Categorizing "women of Taipei" as queer creatures and ambiguous aliens, the speaker defensively excludes the women from being human beings. For him, the women are not humanly acceptable. They are more

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Remembrance, 155.

like specimens of aliens that harbor insidious designs to undermine the race of man, or indeed, of the male. This misogynous view is developed by the image, "the old dragon race." Culturally, Chinese people regard themselves as the descendants of dragons. While nominating the dragon as a totem for national dignity and prestige, they take it as their responsibility to carry on such spirit of Chinese heritage. Named as threatening outsiders, the women are disinherited; accused of deforming "the original highly-displayed" totem, they are more degraded than degrading. The women are at the same time outcasts within and foreigners coming from somewhere outside. In short, they are outlawed. In other words, they are frightening and repelled, because they are stealing away man's law for dominating national history and identity. "Women of Taipei" are occupying the capital and may "deform," disfigure, and in the end, castrate patriarchy.

Thus the speaker goes on to perceive the women as abnormal creatures:

> It may as well be   the carelessness of God,
> An experiment before consciousness and reason crumble—
> Traditional figure paintings in history deliberately remain
> A blank in the brain centers of women: the constant fluidity of
>   will
> Can dominate by no means
> The tenderness of hair and the coquetry of lips.   (9-14)

For the speaker, the women are like objects produced experimentally by the divine figure of patriarchy in its hypnotic state. They are, hence, as careless and irrational as when God's sense totally collapses. For that reason, the women are mindless of the "traditional figure paintings," which are reminiscent of deceased ancestors, sovereign heads, and ultimately, personified patriarchy. The women, instead, are concentrated in their biological "figure[s]," or rather, in bodily seduction. The speaker's perception of woman is thus quite negative. It is partially based on binary opposition: the sensible is most certainly masculine, while the senseless is correspondingly female. In Simone de Beauvoir's words, the speaker complacently "sets himself up as the essential," "the subject," "as opposed to . . . the inessential, the object" (xxiii).

Interestingly, the women perceived as dangerous and yet simple-minded betray the speaker's obscure awareness of their rebellion in disguise. Notice that those paintings "deliberately remain / A blank in the brain centers of women." In other words, the women may be mindful enough to head off the illustrated discourse that asks for their tribute and submission. Their interest in "coquetry" may imply not so much weakness of will to "dominate" their demeanor as an exertion of will to unfasten the bound of "consciousness and reason." Concealed, therefore, within the speaker's perspective is an apprehension of woman's anomalous sexuality. The apprehension is furthermore exposed through a focus on the women's "hair" in relation to "brain" and "lips" referring back to "deform." "Hair," Elizabeth Butler Cullingford observes, represents conventionally "desire and rebellion" (207). It is woman's growing veil to ensnare man into capitulation. "Lips," due to "deform," smack of lipsticks for feigned transformation and, according to Françoise Lionnet, suggest simultaneously "adornment" as well as "armament" (54); it is related to the makeup of both seduction and violence. Read together, "hair" and "lips" incarnate woman's subduing revolt through feminine deceit.

The adversary attitude adopted by the speaker toward "women of Taipei," albeit implicitly, is an agonistic response to man's inability to "stabilize" (de Beauvoir xxxv) the women as objects under control. The omission of a gender pronoun in "the constant fluidity of will" gives evidence to such a position.[10] Besides woman, man could also be the subject of the cited phrase. Thus man is the one who "can dominate by no means / The tenderness of hair and the coquetry of lips." As a result, it is the speaker's "consciousness and reason," which he identifies with godly patriarchy, that "crumble" at the moment of his "being enchanted" (17). He succumbs to unconsciousness when faced with enticing femininity. The women perceived insistently as "aliens" thus stand for no one but his suppressed self. Or, to follow Julia Kristeva's remark that "the other is my unconsciousness" (7), the women are the suppressed

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[10] It is common for a Chinese sentence to appear without the subject. Therefore, the gender of the subject is sometimes ambiguous. Here, Chen

Other, the speaker's unconsciousness, in effect.

Stated further, the speaker's gynsphobia indicates his difficulty in recognizing the complete faces of the self. "On the basis of the other," Kristeva states, "I become reconciled with my own otherness . . . " (182). Taking the women as strangers, the speaker is hence in confrontation with himself. His optical portrait of the women reveal what he suppresses and fails to see. He is, to some extent, confined by patriarchy. Consequently, that which is strangely alien would be that which has been familiar.[11] Senselessness, the frightening nature he sees in the women, is not without relevance to his own sensibility, which is often tempered by patriarchy to present itself as sense.

Proceeding the line with "hair" and "lips," therefore, are the lines betraying the speaker's sensibility in its full meaning:

> Although I am always used to believing,
> To forgiving,
> To being enchanted, (15-17)

It follows that the speaker is no less irrational than the women. If the women adulterate "the literary Taipei," the man is more an accomplice than a victim. He gives credence to deception, pardons the

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makes use of this aspect of Chinese to double the meaning of the quoted line.

[11] This is a rephrase of Kristeva's "that which *is* strangely uncanny would

exposed falsity, and yields to temptation again. The parallel phrases accord with the repetitious entanglement of reality and appearance. The very repetition expresses the speaker's helpless turning to passion in face of deviant femininity. He, too, takes part in tearing down "the literary Taipei." Hence, immediately after the lines introduced by "although" are those indicating the outcome of the speaker's succumbing to eroticism: "As an emptied pocket / Embarrassingly hanging— / When I walk alone in the primitive and waste Taipei, / Complacently / Like an impotent snake" (18-22). He is "enchanted" to discharge his manliness. Similar to an "impotent snake," the speaker becomes the dragon belittled and "deform[ed]" by sexual dissipation. Not aware of his own sharing the temperament opposite to "reason and consciousness," the speaker is self-alienated as a result of being restricted by patriarchy. Unlike the women who may be empowered by rebellion, the speaker is confined by the patriarchy with which he consciously identifies. As a result, he does "stabilize" (de Beauvoir xxxv) himself rather than the women.

In this regard, the displeasing image of woman is countered by that of man in return. The snake's successful persuasion of woman in the biblical version is twisted to emphasize the speaker's impotence. The ironic presentation of the women's superficiality extends to touch finally up on the speaker's inadequacy. Therefore, "Taipei Man" as a whole is criticized. Chen portrays the women through the speaker's voice. By

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be that which *was* familiar . . . ." *Strangers to Ourselves* 193.

giving that voice a note unknown to the speaker, he then conveys a crack of discordance in the controlling perspective. A balance of criticism is thus achieved. Inasmuch as voice is "typically a part of narrative manner" (Phelan 136) the self in "Portrait" is constituted at this stage upon the transmission between the dissident voices of the speaker and the implied poet.

Keyed to dissidence, the implied poet's voice articulates "the relentless war between the sexes" (Lionnet 54). The constant struggle between man and woman is specified in "Taipei Man." For the capital status of Taipei, the estrangement of "Taipei Man" epitomizes that of urban Chinese in Taiwan. Similarly, inauthentic sexuality presented through the portrait of "women of Taipei" exemplifies spiritual exile in the matter of human relationships. The conflation of the part and the whole is carried on through the interplay between urban Taipei and the female body. Before moving into the conclusion on "all of China's / Solitude," Chen employs the interplay to elaborate the self's inescapable emptiness.

Throughout the prologue, therefore, Taipei and woman recur in variation. For example, in line 29, we read "Taipei of no dream. Women of Taipei." The phrases are reminiscent of the speaker's wakefulness appearing several lines earlier: "Tired of being further entangled with the trees of clustering fruits, / Every night, I am awakened by the shaking intercourse of the great earth" (23-24). The lines in quotation display a turbulent world, where the speaker, alone in the night, is awakened to the sleepless Taipei. The outside is restless with frenetic sex. The women "entangled" with sexual decadence are displayed through "the trees of clustering fruits." The association of "the trees" with intercourse for its likeness of curled limbs and thighs might be clarified through a brief reading of Williams' "Portrait of a Lady."

One way to read the short poem is to concentrate on the speaker's recalling his pleasant sex with a lady. Through a tentative recount, the speaker's touch on the lady's sensuous body is vividly represented. This suggestive power is realized by way of playful resonance. For example, the concluding metaphor intimating the clitoris, "petals from an appletree" (22), deliberately echoes the opening one, "Your thighs are appletrees" (1).[12] The image of "appletrees" thus embodies the sex pregnant with fleshly pleasure. In light of this, it becomes clear how sterile and poignant Chen's picture of sex is. In Taipei, love-making is carried on without any hope for inspiring delight. As Zhang Fenling points out, "body and spirit are no longer united" (55). Consequently, love-making is more like an act for making people "tired," for killing passion, perhaps.

Another point in Williams's poem that helps illuminate "Portrait" is the speaker's dissecting focus on the lady's body. Though adored enough, the woman in Williams' "Portrait" appears "no[t] real" but "imaginary" (Conrad 136). Her body is presented in fragmentary forms—"thighs,"

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[12] Williams' "Portrait" is cited from his *Collected Poems* 129.

"knees" (5), "ankles" (14)—to mirror the speaker's hungry eye. The lady thus ceases to be a person in her own right but is refracted and becomes a mere organ or object. A similar gaze at woman is also found in Chen's "Portrait," which tells again the conjunction of woman and Taipei:

> And nothing to look up, except the self's own
> Breasts piercing upward to the sky—Taipei of a basin.
> Women of Taipei. An imperceptible decaying odor
> Imbues the deliberately exposed chest. (36-39)

Here is a self-enclosed world demonstrated through the fragments of the female body, "breasts" and "chest." The women are conceited, short-sighted, and vain. All in all, cheap and casual sex, signified by "the deliberately exposed chest" in particular, is inseparable from their foolish narcissism. Their outlook is limited and self-absorbed, exactly the same as the inward scope of a "basin."

"There is nothing natural about the politics of the female body" (Cullingford 210). What is remarked about Yeats's writing of woman could also be applied to explicate Chen's "portrait of ladies." The speaker's gaze dismembers and reifies invisibly the female bodies. The gaze is, moreover, projected to spotlight "women's internalization of a model of 'femininity' that serves the interests of patriarchy" (Cullingford 210). Thus the women are seen to exhibit their bodies "deliberately" in an attempt to please men's image of them. On the one hand, the women are fixed, being assigned the same roles of observed objects without exception. On the other hand, they are so reduced as to render the gaze as inadequate as their incomplete bodies. In other words, the gaze that is predicated on viewing the self as the sole subject is also criticized. Intersubjectivity is absolutely emptied of significance. Just as Taipei and woman are brought together in such a way as to emphasize separation rather than union, so the self and the other are related and yet alienated from each other.

Again, Kristeva's perception of strangeness is inspiring here. "We are foreigners to ourselves," she states, "and it is with the help of that sole support that we can attempt to live with others" (170). Seeing the other as the only foreigner, the self becomes ultimately estranged from itself. "Taipei Man," in a word, is self-imprisoned in isolation. Indulgence in sex is just a way to occasion togetherness, which, being so perfunctory and superficial, enhances only the self's loneliness. The endless return of emptiness is well captured by the delusive attachment of the sexes:

> The forgotten Taipei.
> The mingled smells of pheromones curl upward.
> The twenty-first century's cooking smokes becloud chastity
> And the obscure expressions of disloyalty; we have learned in
>   time to break the whole
> Into pieces to pay; every day lasts for

The burning of a cigarette. Disposal Taipei. (55-60)

Betrayal and infidelity permeate the whole city. "The obscure expressions of disloyalty" prompt the self to display its secret manner in which it faces the world. And that, unknown to itself, is revealed through its learning to believe even its own sophistry. Too evasive and scrupulous, the self both avoids and is bereft of any commitment. Starting from "we," the following lines conclude the common withdrawal with "Disposal Taipei," which echoes "The forgotten Taipei." Together, the two phrases characterize the relationship that is short-lived and soon sinks to oblivion.

Again, this relationship is brought into being by woman and man alike. The resonance among images testifies to the complicity. "The burning of a cigarette," an image usually associated with man, echoes "smokes." "Smokes," furthermore, gather in "the mingled smells of pheromones," which smack of sexual dissipation. In addition, the speaking voice behind the "we" also indicates the equal involvement in inauthenticity. The final emergence of "we" is prepared by the gradual retreat of "I' from the narrative. The speaker's voice, in other words, gives way finally to a collective voice. As a result, the speaker's perspective is covered by this newly emerging voice. Rather than based on an individual's empirical experience, the voice, which has the authority of collective knowledge and seems to benefit from the implied poet's endorsement, provides an alternative view of "woman in Taipei."

Through the gradual shift from "I" to "we," Chen's "Portrait" expresses a criticism that counterbalances the speaker's view of the women.

In this view, the unfolding of the lonely self follows the dialectic between "the monologic and subjective power of the speaking 'I'" (Kamboureli 44) and the discrete stance of the implied poet. Besides limiting the dominant assumptions of a partial masculine view, the dialectic makes known the islandwide deception that is prompted by sexual desire. To be specific, the constant, implicit shifts of viewpoints are designed to manifest the spiritual emptiness from which none can be absolved.

Even when one remains detached from sexual indulgence, one may still suffer from his concern of the cultural pretension. Hence, in the concluding stanza of the prologue, the speaker utters his unbearable awareness of reality: "And I always lie down remorselessly for sleep, / Taking a great amount of laxative of thought / And sleeping pills of knowledge—" (66-68). Like his futile declaration in the very beginning, "Putting an end to my imaginative eroticism of the whole street, I want to sleep," the speaker's words of immersing himself in slumber disclose instead his persistent "thought" and "knowledge" of the outside turbulence. Underlying the deliberate withdrawal to amnesia is actually insomnia, the helpless wakefulness toward reality. Indeed, the speaker is preoccupied with Taipei figured as degraded femininity.

The "knowledge" just quoted is reminiscent of "In the rustling pursuit of knowledge and love affairs of Taipei" (47), a description proceeding "Taipei of basin. / Women of Taipei." Thus contexualized, "knowledge" connotes not just the speaker's knowing of reality but also the trivia of the women's scandals. Read in this way, the contrived sleep is taken as a tempting alternative to "knowledge." It offers the speaker a respite from being aware of "waste Taipei." Accordingly, the taking of a "laxative" and "sleeping pills" betrays a recognition of "the ultimate futility of thought" (Lobb 177) and a wish to drift away into complete annihilation. There is hence an undercurrent of death in these lines; behind the narrative lies an equation of death with sex. The death-bound meditation on sex is further disclosed in the lines appearing immediately after the dash quoted above: "About nostalgia and the nightmare of 1984. / I have stopped the repetitious anatomies of the corpses, dead from the same disease—" (69-70).

The equation, in fact, is one of Chen's ways to "mourn for the loss of love" (Zhang Fengling 56). It serves both to suppress an unavoidable anxiety and to presuppose reference to female bodies. For the "nostalgia" is nothing else than the "maternal nostalgia" (26) coming to the speaker when he is "awakened by the shaking intercourse of the great earth." "Nostalgia" becomes, hence, that of maternal femininity in contrast with erotic one. "Women of Taipei" represents no longer a homeland embracing man as its offspring but a wasteland that imperils him. What the speaker longs for is loving care from the female other. The homonym in the title of the poem is significant here. The women without "virtues" are by no means the same as those who were portrayed in the conventional "biographies." This is furthered by the "nightmare." The image calls back "Taipei of no dream. Women of Taipei." As discussed earlier, the phrases hint at the sleepless indulgence in sex. "Taipei of no dream" connotes this disturbing reality and a Taipei that has lost an ideal. The speaker is "awakened"; man's dream of returning to mother womb for comfort no longer exists. This "nightmare" of woman's change betrays the speaker's anxiety of loss. Likewise, it is the "nightmare" that ascribes the "bodies" to women. The women dead with venereal "disease" reinforce the speaker's laxity spelled out by "repetitious" and "lengthy." With the stop of "the repetitious anatomy," the hope for restoring the deteriorated reality is abandoned. Paradoxically, the abandonment becomes the only hope for the self, who, alone, "read" and cared for the "pathological report."

Resignation is interpenetrated with longing. The speaker's sense of isolation is deliberately understated by his acceptance of it:

> Every night I enjoy the artificial immaculate
> Sleep in the metal womb. I find
> I am not lonely,
> Because what sleeps with me
> Is all of China's
> Solitude. (72-77)

The speaker's enjoyment of the "metal womb" is a continuation of his helpless anxiety at the women's change. Obviously, the "metal womb" is taken as a substitute for the fleshly one. It suggests either the female womb installed with man-made contraceptive kits or some metallic product, the encompassed space of which is able to effect a mental coma—the screen of a computer or TV set, for example. This kind of nocturnal haunt appears pregnant with unproductive, cold and indifferent contacts. "The metal womb" is not something to be relished as he concedes, but something to which he passively retires. To sleep expresses here his bent of excluding the human world and even of his excluding the women from humans.

The "immaculate" womb is accepted as the only possible area that protects the speaker from the sexually befouled world. So resigned has he become that his denial of loneliness sounds illusory, all the more because he brings up "all of China's / Solitude" to justify himself. The result is not dissolution of personal loneliness but intensification of it through national "solitude." To the same extent, the solitude is manifested through the speaker's implausible assertion that "I am not lonely." Therefore, the evident sense of lack, of emptiness in the speaker's relationship with woman reflects a similar tendency in human relationships in general.

The female body, through which all the speaker's fear, anxiety, and loneliness are encapsulated, becomes, consequently, Chen's poetic icon of the island. Taiwan is becoming disintegrated just as the body is fragmented in the speaker's gaze, and superficial just as the body is always attributed to shallow woman. People in Taiwan are as disunited as the body is to the man, who both desires and rejects it. The isolated position of Taiwan as a political state is no less different from that of "Taipei Man,"[13] which is rendered remote by indulgence in eroticism and the body, its stimulus. It turns out that the narrative disseminating from the female body serves to create a symbolic portrait of the island. In brief, the female body is anonymous and symbolically employed. It articulates the self's problematic relationship to the other sex, in a physical space, Taipei, and all over the national circumstance, Taiwan. The remaining sections will follow Chen's sequential arrangement by dwelling on the specified careers of women, the patriarchal assumptions, and the pretension of the society.

III

The first sequence coming after the prologue is "A Woman Who Delivers Newspaper." The emblem is selected to analyze the male view of the "muted groups" within patriarchy that "rarely allow them to speak as subjects and agents of knowledge" (Lionnet 187). The portrait is of the lady, but, as anticipated by the prologue, the patriarchal standpoint projected from the man's observing gaze is revealed too. The lines in the third stanza precisely work on this effect. "That is all what I can meet, a middle-aged, philistine woman" (81):

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[13] The relation between the political isolation and the individual loneliness, though a good point, is only slightly touched by Chen and not developed further in the rest of the poem. As such, this chapter will not

> Pulling a cart of red tea to refill men's sweat—
> And adeptly swinging that pair of
> Precocious, overworking, and early drooping buttocks. (84-86)

The self's observance of the other leads to a visual image of the other but also facilitates the vision to reflect on the self. The image of the self is either affirmed or denied in return. As the lines indicate, the latter is the case in "Portrait." Here, the speaker's gaze at the "philistine woman" is focused on her sexual characteristics, the pair of buttocks. They are accurately observed to expose the woman's aging aridity. In a way, the rigid and bold gaze dominates the female body. The impudence attendant upon the gaze, in S. H. Clark's words, "precludes any disaffected male perspective or independent female viewpoint" (13). The erotic diction of "adeptly swinging," moreover, reflects upon the projected gaze and transmits itself to the speaker. That is, the speaker's words on the woman turn back to verbalize his sexual disposition.

The view that woman is an object of patriarchal knowledge is consistent with that in the prologue. More specifically, the mode of perception on the fragments of the female body is characteristic of the

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develop the argument further.

speaker's observation in "Women of Taipei." There is hence a line of narrative continuity. An excluded bachelor, slightly wistful, yet determined in his self-enclosed detachment, is again used to further the narrative. Accordingly, the man's relationship with woman remains the same; the relationship is as fragmented and partial as the mode of perception itself.

"The disclosive power of language," Kerby states, "is formative of the subject" (82). The conception could be further developed to say that the self is revealed by its narration.[14] In fact, the lonely and incomplete self has been brought into view through the specific syntactical pattern in the prologue. The broken sentences, unexpected brevity of phrases, suspension of participles, and especially, the recurrent dash and parenthesis are features pointing to the ruptured relationship. The dash, for example, usually emerges to present a close-up of the female body. In the lines quoted above, the dash leads the speaker to focus on the pair of buttocks. While prolonging the immediacy of sight, the dash detains the narrative to introduce other images. In other words, narrative continuity is ruptured by the dash that enables proximity to the female body. Intrinsically, the rupture in narrative intimates the self in disintegration. The fragments of the body cannot be integrated in the end, nor can the speaker's relation to its agent be complete. It is as if his separation from woman would never be carried through.

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[14] See especially Kerby's "The Semiotic Subject." *Narrative and the Self*

In a sense, the speaker's discord with the other determines his perspective. The perspective tends to fall on the individual parts rather than the totality of woman. This metonymic displacement precludes the constitution of the body and, consequently, the embodiment of subjectivity. To his eye, woman is much less a subject than an object. The view seems to be entertained by a class quite different from that of the "philistine woman." The woman belongs to the class that takes pains to satisfy man's biological need as suggested by "pulling a cart of red tea to refill man's sweat." Yet, designated by the title, the woman is at the same time the provider of newspapers and, in this way, the distributor of knowledge. The disapproving connotation of "philistine" can thus refer ironically to the speaker. Along with his partial perception, the irony reveals a man who is no more cultured than the woman he looks down on.

He is, in fact, more limited than the woman under observation. His words bracketed within the following parentheses are caustic and even hostile:

> (Today, she wears a raincoat.
> She makes a bun with something in mind
> Yes, she even tries
> To timidly greet me . . . . Oh, is she also self-conscious of

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101-108.

humbleness?)

> And me. I am stingy with my smile.
> (Humph! She looks as if she still dreamed as a seventeen-year-
> old girl.) (87-92)

The words sound like a soliloquy; they disclose the speaker's contempt for the woman without her knowing. Ironically, the speaker himself is the one really in the dark. The words picture a humble and yet graceful woman seen by a sulky, sarcastic man standing in a murky background. Indeed, the two figures are presented for contrast. The woman's timidity implies her difficulty to conceive herself as a subject endowed with agency and an ability to speak. Her "humbleness," however, endows her with grace and compensates for the apparent limitation. On the contrary, the speaker is "stingy" to respond to the woman's friendliness. His attitude is that of egotistic aloofness. The sense of superiority undermines his complacent dominion over knowledge, from which the "philistine" woman is excluded. Indeed, there is an implied contrast between the woman's humility that is "endless" and the man's knowledge that is "limited" (Lobb 177).

Similar to the function of the dash, the parenthesis inscribes the speaker's isolation and predetermines his perspective. His strict eyesight, like the bracketed lines, places around the self a closed boundary. Interestingly, isolation also occurs in T. S. Eliot's "Portrait." Throughout the poem, the man is immersed either in his estimation of the lady or in his anxious reckoning of his involvement with her. As in Chen's "Portrait," the immersion is kept unknown to the lady under observation. The consequent suggestion of the man's "inhibiting detachment in his human relationship" (Scofield 66) does not vary much from that in Chen. In fact, both Eliot and Chen aim to reveal the man, as well as the woman, in their respective portraits.

The revelation in Eliot's "Portrait" lies in the man's deceitfulness. Throughout the poem, the man has compelled to protect himself from emotional engagement. Running parallel to the need, however, is his callous encouragement of the lady's emotional hope for him. In the lady's response, for example, the man's perfunctory reply is heard: "(For indeed I do not love it [her life] . . . you *knew*? You are not blind! / How keen you are!)" (22-23; emphasis added).[15] His dealing with the lady's attention is not mere carelessness. As his monologue implies, it indicates also his solipsism. It is noteworthy that his secret retreat from emotion is put in opposition to the lady's emotional entreaties. Through a sophisticated syntax, Eliot has the lady's words put in direct speech and interrupted by the man's defensive recoil ushered in by dashes. Like Chen, Eliot also employs dashes to manifest the self's isolation. George Williamson observes that "Eliot employs the dash to indicate a hiatus or sudden transition" (71). The line cut away from its continuing sequence recounts the man's anxious attempt to break off.

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[15] The poem is quoted from Eliot's *Collected Poems* 18-22.

A dash, for example, comes just in the middle of the lady's tangential talk on affections: "—And so the conversation slips / Among velleities and carefully caught regrets / . . . / And begins" (14-18). Sandwiched between the lady's "'So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul / Should be resurrected only among friends'" (10-11) and "'You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends'" (19), the man's words after the dash are conspicuously monologic and inconsonant. Rather than making his mind clear to the lady, the man sinks into his pensive mood to ward off her solicitations. The result is "a hopeless split between internal emotion and external gesture" (Schwartz 333). It is natural that the lady nurses her hopes till the end of the poem, while the man feels stressed by the conversation that lacks any communicative touch.

The man's detachment, in fact, has unwittingly involved him in the situation he is partly responsible for. That the conversation has developed a pattern of its own as the music is set to some score is a sign of his victimizing status. An increasing undercurrent of uneasiness is channeled into the words "slips" and "begins" quoted above. The two persons' exchange of words seems to follow a repetitious pattern. Differently put and yet always pushed to the same topic, the exchange beats a "dull tom-tom" (32) upon the man's "brain" (32). While exposing the lady's "'false note'" (35), this "capricious monotone" (34) pinpoints also the man's obstinacy. He tries to remain invariably "self-possessed"

(78) to "all the things to be said, or left unsaid" (7).

The conversation thus becomes an arena of words that compete for attention. For the man, the best way to win is to render the personal untouched. Hence, immediately after the "'false note'" comes another dash to exhibit his wish to "correct" the topic:

> —Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
> Admire the monuments,
> Discuss the late [sic] events,
> Correct our watches by the public clocks
> Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks. (36-40)

All he can afford is a short-lived moment, and the time together with the lady ought to be spent either on chat about public news or on soundless occupation with smoking and drinking. Everything mentioned and shared should go like clockwork. Such a watchful stance betrays a drastic need for forgetfulness. The man feels so much stressed by the lady's exploitative suggestions that he longs to obliterate any personal and emotional digressions in their talk. His relationship with the lady possibly originates from his need to be distracted from loneliness. As a matter of fact, he longs to be left alone, but without feeling lonely. The shared "tobacco" and "bocks" provide just such secluded time and space. The intoxicants can carry both the self and the other into the dim recess of consciousness. There, the self is at once accompanied and sheltered in its own existence, away from any unwanted commitment.

The dash, therefore, brings in "a consciousness of broken connections" (Brooker 123). The man in the poem is "incapable of the kind of emotion that is demanded of him" (Schwartz 332). It is the same as the man in Chen's "Portrait." In spite of his awareness of his own stinginess, he remains unbending to the woman's greeting. The speaker does, however, possess some insight. He is able to look into the self's reluctance. Most important of all, he senses "all of China's / Solitude" under the overwhelming eroticism. Yet, his perspective remains untouched by his insight. If he can penetrate the self and the other sometimes, why can't he do so all the time? Is there any plausibility in the narrative itself that explains this inconsistency? The man's desire to turn away from his insight is, in fact, inseparable from Chen's exposure of patriarchy. From the prologue to the sequence here, the narrative of "Portrait" has been supported by the divergent views between the man and the implied poet. This inconsistency becomes almost unavoidable when such a division should arise. For it is through the divergence that the implied poet's irony toward man is made possible. Correspondingly, it is because of the inconsistency that the irony and the man's defective perspective are highlighted. The inconsistency thus helps bring to prominence how a man's attitudes can be confined as the result of belonging to the privileged group in patriarchy.

Thus, the momentary insight exposes the man's confinement. Shortly after the "stingy" "smile," for example, the man's helplessness offense is captured:

> I stoop to pick up the scattered compassion in the human world;
> My hands support the icy glass frame of knowledge.
> I say: good morning. Stuff the cross you worship
> Into the bleeding lower part of your body. (93-96)

Here is a man so conscious of every movement of his body that his utterance sounds equally calculated and reluctant. His "good morning," moreover, appears so incongruent with his blasphemy that the two cannot be spoken out at the same time. Apparently, the latter is uttered soundlessly on his mind. The silent profanity intimates his difficulty in disengaging the self from solipsism. On the one hand, the woman's humbleness and friendliness have aroused a temporary sense of "compassion" on the man's part. On the other, her attitude has the liberating potential of forcing the self out of its familiar boundary. Unexpectedly threatening, the compassion produces instead an uncontrollable anger toward the woman; for she disturbs his indifference that has remained inveterate as indicated by the "icy glass frame" worn next to the skin. The incongruity, therefore, comes to show the man's strenuous attempt to deny both his urge towards what the woman offers and the destructive vehemence her offering concomitantly provokes.

The greeting, so to speak, must have been accompanied by a wince. The man's condescending stance is, hence, self-deprecating. It reveals a troubled man who cannot present an unconstrained face to the world. The limit, interestingly, is correlated with knowledge. For one thing, the "scattered compassion" he "stoop[s]" to "pick up" is the newspaper fallen down to the ground after "hitting" upon the "crisp window" (77). For another, his cool perversity is "support[ed]" by the "icy glass frame of knowledge." The first case depicts a reality, in which man loses his sensitivity to the news poured upon him day after day. The availability of news, and so knowledge, has ironically issued a burden to the self, still a bit sympathetic to objectified events. In the second case, the accumulation of knowledge instead increases blind spots in the self's perspective. It is notable that the man's stooping gesture is toward the "philistine" woman. Evidently, the man looks down on the one he considers as ignorant. Rather than a key to open vision, knowledge here is more like an obstacle that blocks the self from lucid perception.

As a consequence, the self's intolerance to its differentiation from the other is revealed. Most important of all, the differentiation is gendered. The one with knowledge is definitely the man, while the ignorant one is the woman. In her "An Other Space," Jane Moore points out "the assumption in the history of Western (male) thought that to know is to master, and to be masterful is usually to be male" (65).[16]

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[16] The view, as Moore points out, derives from Barbara Johnson's analysis of the "gender politics of pedagogy." For detail, see Johnson's "Teaching Ignorance."

There is also similar assumption in Chinese thought.[17] Truly, the speaker's view is conditioned, in Moore's words, by "the old cultural opposition where femininity is aligned with . . . ignorance and masculinity is aligned with mastery" (73). The speaker's perspective only exposes a deep-seated bias, a self-complacent superiority clearly fostered by a patriarchal definition of sexual identity. The speaker's distorted stance, however, discloses the fact that even the masculinity that stays abreast with authority is inevitably suppressed by patriarchy.

This kind of thought could be also detected in Pound's "Portrait d'une Femme." The poem begins with the speaker's comparing the lady to a sea that is full of the disposable stuffs:

> You mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
> London has swept about you this score years
> And bright ships left you this or that in fees:
> Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
> Strange sparse of knowledge and dimmed wares of price. (1-5)[18]

In the comparison, the speaker draws upon the patriarchal opposition and places the lady on the side that is dispossessed of genuine knowledge. Such a lack of command is ascertained in the intentional divorce of "your mind" from "you." So addressed, "you" becomes a person without mind and hence intelligence; independent of "you," "your mind" belongs not to "you" but is subordinated to someone else. The speaker's mode of address immediately constructs an inferior subject.

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[17] The Chinese assumption could be best illustrated through the imperial examination system. Under the system, only man could sit for the examination to prove his erudition, thereby starting his official career.

The opposition of knowledge and ignorance is also filtered into the speaker's indisputable tone. Being the sole voice, the speaker articulates the lady's mind with authoritative certainty.[19] Containing the definite "is" and "are," the speaker's peremptory statements express his bold approach to the lady, whom he takes as easily understood. In lines 14-16, for example, the speaker's affirmative is heard: "Yes, you richly pay. / You are a person of some interest, one comes to you / And takes strange gain away"; in the last three lines, there is the negative that sounds even more assertive: "No! there is nothing! In the whole and all, / Nothing that's quite your own. /   Yet this is you" (28-30). Almost everything about the lady is informed in a conclusive manner. Words of arguments and conjectures are absent just like the absence caused by the blank spacing before "yet." The speaker does not really converse; he declares. In short, he knows, without doubt.

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[18] The poem is cited from Pound's *Persone* 57-58.

[19] Such a tone is characteristic of Pound's poem. According to Jean-Michel Rabate, Pound is inclined to posture himself "as the dominant authorial

The lady, then, appears passive and elusive of the characterization in which the speaker sees to fix her. She is first of all subdued by the speaker's governing metaphor. The speaker's way of addressing makes explicit that "the interlocutee matters very little" (Hamilton 64). Though designated as the supposedly speaking "you," the lady remains voiceless before the speaker's words. The absence of voice has come to "transform the you into an It" (Hamilton 64). The man's subjective speech dominates, but there is no communicative dialogue. Naturally, there is no intersubjectivity. Woman is again treated as an object and her representation is "the object of patriarchal knowledge" (Lionnet 187). Here in Pound, as well as in Chen, Williams, and Eliot, the man's controlling eye circumscribes his view of woman. The eye takes the woman in to the man's sight, freezing her femininity, defining and degrading it.

The problem is that woman assimilates the definition. In Pound's "Portrait," the speaker's words possess the poignant cadence that usually lies behind cynicism. What is cynically said about the lady is arbitrary and yet not totally untrue. She has "been second always" (7) and "prefer[s] it to the usual thing: / One dull man, dulling and uxorious, / One average mind—with one thought less, each year" (8-10). Being the second choice of any man other than a "dull" one is the price she pays for a life far below mediocrity. "The dulling and uxorious" she

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voice in his text." *Language* 12.

repudiates is replaced with the "gaudy" (22) and "rare" (23), the debased state of the brilliant and inspiring. She wants to grasp sparkling "thought." When she tires, she ends up with whatever proves to be ephemerally unusual at its best. In addition to the ironic discrepancy, her pursuit epitomizes a woman's strivings for knowing by associating herself with any man capable of providing unusual ideas. Such a vain attempt reveals a self-inflicted impasse. Both a receiver and collector of the "strange spars of knowledge," the lady allows herself to be the author of her predicament: domestic life is mostly dull, while anything else is empty in the end. An alternative to a harmonious match between man and woman never comes to her mind. Inasmuch as man has "sought" her for "lacking someone else" (6), an alternative is also unavailable. The lady's ending with "nothing" testifies to the absence of a mutual relationship between the sexes.

The dissonance lying behind the unconscious equation of knowledge with masculinity and power also occurs in Chen's "Portrait." Yet, just as man does not necessarily benefit from the equation, so woman does not necessarily adopt it. The comparison between Pound's "Portrait" and Chen's makes it clear that Pound implicates symmetrically both man and woman in the equation that Chen divulges and yet ascribes more to man than to woman. In the stanza following the man's overbearing aloofness in Chen's poem, the woman's inferior position is reversed as the implied poet's voice gradually overrides the speaker's. At first, the man may still be the speaker: "In the early morning, the tick-tack of her bicycle dims away, / House by house, passing each heavily locked dreamland" (98-99). In the parenthetical lines that follow, however, the reality can hardly be witnessed by the man whose perspective is revealed as prejudiced: "(The city exposes in sleep its primeval hardness / And parsimonious paleness)" (100-101). Such an impersonal statement, as already illustrated in the prologue, seems to be that of implied poet. His voice is frequently there to destabilize and question the man's view of the women of Taipei. When he speaks, he suggests a retort from the women's side. The shift of voice in the quoted lines signals, therefore, a change of position.

The woman is no longer seen as timid and subordinate. Instead, she appears clear of the "heavily locked dreamland," "passing" over, exceeding, indeed, "Taipei Man" who is imprisoned within. The "locked" is reminiscent of the "key" in the prologue: "Often I lift the key, so molded and so stubborn, / To probe which door can be opened— / Numerous hearts confined in the iron grille and the stockade" (40-42). Under "lock" and "key," "Taipei Man" is shown to be not only locked out but also locked in relentlessly within the self's defensive indifference. Hence, "hardness" and "paleness," other words for alienation and listlessness, come to be characteristic of urban males. The overwhelming enclosure desensitizes the mind as dream in sleep does to consciousness. Unquestionably, the urban males, like the perverse speaker, are "hard" to sympathize with the woman's unpretentious friendliness. In this view, it is the hardness that is celebrated. The woman, ruthlessly unrecognized, becomes all the more distanced and different. As such, she paradoxically rises above and subverts the perspective in which urban males and the speaker alike seek to exclude her.

Consequently, the epithet of "philistine" and the discrimination hidden behind it are rendered invalid. Again, the speaker's voice is shown to be anomalous with respect to the implied poet's. In the concluding stanzas, the narrating "I" is totally replaced by an omniscient point of view. The implied poet's voice is heard as the woman's distinctive sobriety becomes present in the end:

> Memory falls and breaks, breaks and falls, and is still collected.
> —On beds, everyone embraces himself,
> Embracing a ticklish tomorrow,
> A tad unresponsive to love-making,
> Flinching and retreating, retreating and flinching—if having a
> dream when it breaks,
>
> She is always the first to get up. (107-112)

Here, the implied poet voices helpless emptiness: the inability of intercourse to reach closeness, the moment that cannot be shared more than physically. "Love-making," as the lines disclose, ceases to pave the way to spiritual togetherness. In the present reality, it becomes a posthumous act, resumed for its ever crushing the invisible distance between the self and the other. "Collected" in the broken "memory," therefore, is the longing that is so intensified as to become fear. While creating communion, sexual contact with another being threatens the radical surrender of the self to the other. The power of love-making is deconstructive. It breaks down the "monadic self" (Clark 221) only after mutual reliance is first of all constructed. Into the ironic metaphor of "ticklish tomorrow," however, the ultimate lack of trust is finally channeled. The self is engaged with the sexual act that is carried on through touch. Yet, it is afraid of tickling, "flinching and retreating," from the other's approach. The self, so to speak, is incapable of feeling the other and relying upon the other's hand. Accordingly, the other is effaced; it is turned into an object to make a simulacrum of love. It follows that love-making is called upon both to annul loneliness and deemed to expose the self to overwhelming betrayal. Hence, "On beds, everyone embraces himself." What the self gets hold of during love-making is its isolation enhanced by the very act.

The reserved and "unresponsive" self is thus making a dream at the same time it makes love. The way out of isolation through sex is the dream that renders the self "heavily locked" within its own fear and longing. Such a dream, as suggested by the last line—"She is always the first to get up"—is left behind by the woman who delivers the newspaper, the printed media of reality. The speaker's previous view of her inferiority is undone here. The fact that she wakes up to the reality of surviving a humble and even a humiliated life does not in the least cross out her singular abstinence. Being "the first to get up" from the dream and, so, realistically awakened, the woman distinguishes herself from "Taipei Man" who suffers from self-inflicted loneliness.

Finally, her role of a news carrier comes into play with her "philistine" character. The man depends on the one he despises to acquire access to the represented reality in newspapers. Ignorance is thus revealed not as a totally opposite of knowledge but "'an integral part of the very structure of knowledge'" (Felman qtd. in Moore 73). In a sense, ignorance is no longer a defect but a premise for knowing. Hence, the implied poet's voice contradicts the speaker's. Chen discloses the speaker's sexist view through the very diction he uses to describe the woman. In this way, Chen works through the patriarchal portrait of woman to deconstruct it. The strategy of laying bare inadequacy from within is continuously applied to "Hooker."

Though the shortest sequence in "Portrait," "Hooker" is still complicated in its narrative of loss and despair. The sequence is introduced by an "I" that is occupied with the soliloquy of the self in need of a tangible other: "Walking in Ximen Ding, always feeling the need to embrace something / Or / To be embraced by something, tightly" (113-115).[20] The desperate longing for affection is manifested by the speaker's immediate denial of loneliness: "(But I never feel lonely; / I am a kind of drug)" (116-117). Only by imaging itself as drug can the "I" justify the use of "never." Prepared by the title, "Hooker," the "drug" prescribes the addiction to sexual convenience. The assertive rationale exposes the self's helpless involvement with the supply and demand for sex. Besides, the assertiveness diagnoses the impossibility of ever finding a mate, of which the "I" is psychologically conscious. The "resentment" (Zhang Hanliang, "Urban Poetry" 173) is evidenced in the concluding understatement:

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[20] Ximen Ding has been one of the most popular commercial districts in

> To be embraced is always good
> Even by one's own shadow.
>
> Even by hunger.   (121-123)

The quoted lines, according to Zhang Hanliang, are rich with the interplay of "absence and presence" ("Urban Poetry" 172). The speaking "I" that wanders on the street is "in presence" ("Urban Poetry" 173) in the narrative. It is so "hunger" as to embrace its "own shadow." The unquenchable "hunger" is that for a genuine companion and, as such, expresses doomed loneliness that is, in fact, implied and "in absence" ("Urban Poetry" 173) in the narrative. The interplay is designed to reveal the self's "estrangement" ("Urban Poetry" 173) from the other. Zhang Hanliang's view could be furthered by a look at "Hooker." Indeed, the

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Taipei.

intricate poignancy emanates first from the title itself. The speaker's sense of loneliness is ironically overshadowed by the manifest presence of "Hooker," a role that cannot be played alone.

A question arises after the sequence comes to an end. Whose voice is this that runs through the lines? In short, who is designated by the first-person pronoun? In the previous sequences, the "portrait of a lady" is founded on a privileged masculine gaze to represent the female. The speaker is mostly the male "I" and the portrayed lady is the third person named in the title of each sequence. In other words, the woman nominated by the title is the one being spoken about. Here, however, it is the speaker that is identified by the title. The woman who is supposed to be spoken about is at the same time the "I" who speaks. Since "hooker" is a feminine term in Chinese,[21] the speaking "I" is the woman herself.

Yet, both the tone and wording here are continuously similar to those uttered by the implied poet and, especially, the speaker in the preceding sequences. The implied poet's presence in the words, "everyone embracing himself," resounds through the phrases, "to be embraced" and "by one's own shadow." Likewise, the "drug" recalls the male speaker's "taking" a "laxative of thought" and "sleeping pills of knowledge." The agitating isolation given forth by his deceptive negative, "I am not lonely," moreover, is strikingly echoed by "I never feel lonely" in "Hooker." The emotional tonality of the "I" in this sequence, in some manner, is much more masculine than feminine. Or, stated otherwise, the masculine perspective has been adopted to facilitate the feminine one.

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[21] The Chinese title of the sequence means literally "the youngster whose

The perspective leads to another question. In Laura Claridge's words, "how effectively a well-intentioned male author can inhabit a woman's voice" (15). Can't Chen, who has so far questioned, invalidated, and deprecated the male speaker's prejudice of woman, successfully voice an independent female perspective? It would be the male poet's failure if the unaffected perspective is his purpose. Conversely, when a different purpose is accomplished on the condition of the dependence, the facilitation should be regarded as a gain instead. As pointed out earlier, Chen tends to expose patriarchy from within: the portrait is of the woman, but it is the man, too, who is being gradually revealed and criticized. In "Hooker," the revelation that enables the implied poet to dismantle eventually the patriarchal assumption lying behind the man's criticism of the woman is renounced. Yet, the purpose of deconstructing patriarchy is still maintained, only in a more tactful way.

Here, it is the woman's immediate revelation of herself that is appropriated to realize the purpose. To begin with, her interior monologue lays stress on her internalization of patriarchal discourse. Her self-annihilation, the flattening of her being into a mere erotic "drug," for instance, betokens her taking sex as a means of overcoming isolation. In her very words, she is found to agree with the chauvinistic view of

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wings have fallen."

forming a sexual connection with a woman to do away with emptiness. The woman, so to speak, is that hideous aspect of patriarchy incarnate. The first-person pronoun thus serves both the woman and the embodied patriarchy. In this respect, it is both natural and necessary that a masculine perspective infiltrates her voice.

Her unconscious identification, moreover, is not mediated by the male speaking voice as it is sometimes in the prologue. It is directly announced by the speaking "I," the woman herself. Since she is no longer the absent other that may be, and in fact is, subjected to the view of the male "I," it becomes groundless to restore her image by way of exposing the one-sided, unjustified comment. Now that she is responsible for her own words, her verbalized image cannot be redeemed through the differentiation of "I" and "she." The more irredeemable her degraded image is, the more completely patriarchy is laid bare. Because the speaking "I" internalizes patriarchy, whatever it utters to deflate the woman's self-image comes to denounce patriarchy in the end and, again, from within.

Whether the "I" is male or female, it is charged to express the poet's "antipatriarchal position" (Claridge 14). What has been articulated, finally, is the poet's attempt to voice himself out. Identifying the speaking "I" with the woman, Chen utters the seemingly unchangeable judgment of the masculine voice. Doubling the "I" through the woman's internalization, he makes known that woman may act as abettor to serve the interest of patriarchy. Shifting the identity of the speaking voice, finally, he acknowledges the multiple and unstable stance of the narrating self. Namely, the portrayed self is constantly changing; its voice, always constructed rather than given.

At this point, the lonely self in Chen is not only constituted on the tension between the implied poet and the male speaker. It is, more precisely, constituted on the dynamics between him and patriarchy that is either identified or embodied by both man and woman. Apparently, the relationship between man and woman is continuously in conflict. The implied poet's voice, to apply James Phelan's concept, thus "functions as a crucial third member of the chorus" (135). It may "debunk both [man's and woman's] voices" (135) when the two bear the suppressing traces of patriarchy. It may also "approve" (135) and sympathize with both when the two struggle to be heard from the constrictions of patriarchy. Or, it may "privilege" (135) one as in the case of its dissenting with the man's prejudice against the observed woman. In the last section, the construction of the lonely self that is complicated by the third-person indirect discourse of both man and woman in Chen's remaining sequences will be illustrated.

IV

As is immediately clear, "Mistress" is the sequence with a difference: the implied poet's voice is dominant in the third-person pronouns. Here, the masculine gaze is refocused to fall on both man and woman. The result is not a woman speaking or spoken by a man. Instead, there is a non-explicit "I" talking about "he" and "she." The implied poet speaks here with an androgynous voice. He resides in the consciousness of the third-persons, occasionally translating their feelings and thoughts, and, for the most part, "rendering" them in the man's or the woman's own "idiom" (Cohn 100). By constantly keeping their voices latent, Chen avoids arbitrary judgement on their bondage to patriarchy. Another advantage is to glide in and out of their minds to uncover the patriarchal values implied in their shaping and submitting to each other's identity. The aim, as mentioned earlier, is to reach a balance of criticism on man, woman, and patriarchy. The first two are subsumed by the oppressive third to such a degree that they take in and help maintain its legitimacy by opposing the other sex they actually long to "embrace."

The opening line brings into view a woman's taking part in the formation of her identity: "In waiting she stands there to become a poem" (124). Her being is conditioned and constructed out of waiting. Presupposed by the lament in the prologue, "this is no longer a country for poetry," the connotation of "poem" is centered on spiritual degeneration. What are related to the degeneration in the previous sequences could be hence reclaimed to figure the woman: sexuality, deceit, loneliness, and emptiness. Depraved intercourse, as a consequence, is suggested to identify the woman. And this is indeed supported by the following lines, "Man's watery gaze / Has not yet wetted her; her soul withers, / Unable to foreground itself from a trance" (125-127) and, above all, in the concluding ones, "Because / This is her profession" (131-132). The woman is by "profession" a "mistress." She does not just trade her body in sexual dealings. Her selling of soul is also intimated by the implied poet's irony toward her concern with man's "watery gaze." Her dependence on the gaze to revive the self "from a trance" and, so, be consciously alive, emphasizes her making a living from man's attentive manipulation of her identity.

Seduction, in this way, is critical of the woman's relationship with man; it is first of all an interested commerce between unequaled parties.[22] This "inherent imbalance" (Newman ix) consumes the woman's subjectivity. In "waiting" for man's gaze, the woman becomes synonymous with passivity and vulnerability. Waiting, in fact, marks woman's conformity to patriarchal view of her. In Pound's "Portrait," the lady never sees herself as capable of originating ideas; she has been "patient" (10) and "sit[s]" (10) "hours" (11) for the ideas thrown out by the passing men. In Eliot's, the lady suppresses her anxious fear of losing her lover. In a way he really hopes for and needs, she tells both him and herself that she will live on as usual: "I shall sit here, serving tea to friends . . . " (68). In Chen, waiting is even more related to the woman's self-betrayal. Giving consent to her identity as a "mistress," the woman waits for the man to buy her. She allows her being to be "commodified"

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[22] The idea derives from S. H. Clark's citing Jenny Newman's remark that seduction "'can never occur between equals'." See Clark's Introduction. *Sordid Images* 25. For the original source, see Newman's Introduction. *The*

(Cullingford 224) within the patriarchal marketing of sex. This reification is accentuated by the lines rich with semiotic ambiguity in the word "service":

> (Sunday. Every day is like Sunday.)
> How wonderful. She thinks: except
> Sunday service. . . . . (133-135).

After the unfolding of marketable sexuality, it is hard to leave aside the contrast of "Sunday service" with erotic service; it is furthermore so because of the transposition of the interior monologue. At first, the parenthesis includes the words running through the mistress's mind. Every day is the same as Sunday. Conversely, Sunday repeats every other day and typifies the predictable pattern of daily life. As such, Sunday ceases to be an interval of rest; it remains occupied with daily concern, of which it is supposedly free. For the woman, therefore, time is everlasting without transition. She works day in, day out, engaged with routine dates, without a break. Her interior monologue implies that she is and will be a mistress in the service of man. Erotic service makes the mistress's day.

Delight is replaced with disappointment when Sunday is found to be ironically both exceptional and no exception. As the mistress' words

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Faber Book of Seductions ix.

break up and become recorded outside the parenthesis, her mental domain is encroached upon by the implied poet's voice. What follows the clause "She thinks" is the implied poet's articulation of the woman's mind. The subsequent thought is the woman's, but the wording and tone are the implied poet's. The distinction, so to speak, brings up a marked discordance of views. That is, the woman's unpleasant thinking of Sunday, of its being the only day for churchgoing, is critically assessed by the implied poet. Read in this way, the woman's cool dismay at "Sunday service" calls attention to its ironic counterpart, her complacent entertainment of erotic service. More exposed than expressed, the woman's preference points to a view she herself is unable to detect: sexuality is esteemed more highly than spirituality; religious salvation is belittled. Beyond this, the woman falls to the carnal underside.

Thus she settles her being and identity upon corporeal ground. This is particularly relevant to the lines extending to the man's thoughts of the mistress. To the question of his mistress, "(How many times a week do we make love?)" (149), the man responds this way: "Yes. She always looks just like taking a bath" (150). Without giving an answer, he thinks secretly and distances himself from the woman. In his speculative eye, the mistress appears either ready for making love or just doing it. The private opinion of her recurs in the man's soliloquy: "She is like a bob-haired girl student, / Like his daughter, / Like his mother in the picture. . . ." (151-153).

In each "like" is disclosed a characteristic of the mistress. Besides sexual, she looks innocent, filial, and devoted. In relation to one another, each characteristic connotes resemblance in disguise and, eventually, dissemblance in reality. Each feature of hers, moreover, is interrelated with a role she plays. The roles cover almost every significant period of a female life except that of being a wife. The discovery is hence twofold: the other roles are capable of being played by a mistress only in default of the wifely role and the essential features associated with "wife"—legitimacy and loyalty according to the context—are negated by the other roles. The incompatibility between "wife" and "mistress" reflects finally woman's affected identity. Woman might resort to makeup when her lawful role is ultimately in demand. Her legitimate position could also be overthrown by seduction. The conflict between the roles, or rather, between women, has persistently modulated woman's identity over generations from "girl" to "mother" in a patriarchal society.

Apart from the conflict, the recurrence of "like" suggests also the man's attempt to name the mistress. As with the word "like" in a series, the man's gaze moves successively toward the woman's changing face. On closer inspection, the observing gaze, to quote Nikos Papastergiadis, "reflects the paradox of woman in man's imaginary":

> On the one hand (sic) woman must wait for man to come into being, but on the other hand the split in her identity implies not only that there is a side of woman that man can never realise, but also that this opposition precludes her from ever entering

> the real. (176)

Thus the image the man reaches is "his mother in the picture." Woman continues to pose and be approached within fictitious frame. Her portrait is accepted as the only area of shared truth. When man tries to "realise" woman, he has no other possibility than to have recourse to her re-presentation. Likewise, when woman depends on man to "realise" her being as the mistress does in waiting, she is obliged to fit her self into its image in the masculine eye. It is appearance that originates and verifies being, but not vice versa. Recognizing, rather, a simulacrum of reality, man and woman alike forever miss "the real." They rely on appearance to conceive each other.

It is no surprise that the man's view of the mistress should lead away from characterization to generalization. In the face of the illusory, it is usually the latter that counts. Not by way of designating specific roles, therefore, the man's conclusion of the mistress is reached through an abstract word: " . . . . He thinks, / "She is too obviously a *lie*" (153-154; emphasis added). Lie is of course based on deviation from reality. Isn't this a clue to the mis/understanding of truth? In the man's thinking, the appearance of his own self is missed. As already pointed out, his very words expose also his deception. He tells lies.

This one-sided thinking is questionable and questioned, indeed, by the implied poet. In a way similar to "she thinks," the implied poet's decision to represent a direct speech marks an ironic gap between his and the man's viewpoints. The conclusion, in a word, is what "he [the man] thinks" alone. Accordingly, the man's idea is not the mere fact. Letting the man speak for and to himself, the implied poet actually disengages himself from the man's stance. A different, though less audible, view of the mistress is suggested. Isn't her multiple identity both in correspondence and reaction to the man's, which is at the same time a boy, son, and father, but never husband? The implicit tone of impatience and distaste in his commentary—"Yes. She always looks like just taking a shower"—is also reversible. Isn't he the partner that makes possible the role of the mistress, of her being ready for sex? In view of the mistress's sexual appearance, the man is seen to accompany the very role he assigns and condemns. The two thus shape each other's identity, which returns to produce their own.

Having signaled his dissent with the man's accusation of the mistress, the implied poet continues to divulge the blind spot of the man's perspective. The concluding stanza of the sequence expresses the implied poet's penetrating assessment. The man's monologue, once again, is conducted to betray his own inadequacy. As if aware of his part in the mistress's "profession," for instance, the man talks to himself "the rationale of prostitution" (Leighton 355): "And he is nothing but a man, / Always believing in beauty . . ." (155-156). Here, he is shown to excuse himself of what he accuses the mistress of. The femininity imprinted by male sexuality is called up to justify his involvement with the woman. His justification suggests "the complicity between 'man's law' and moral law" (Leighton 345). The very nature of virtue and vice is no longer determined by morality but by patriarchy. Man is privileged and allowed to be not only the arbiter of morality but also the go-between.[23] As a result, female subjectivity can be sanctioned only by her "sexual propriety" to man. She can fight against the inequality. She can flee from it too. But the best maneuver is to flow with it. It is no wonder that Chen plays on "various" and "virtuous" in the title of his poem. The conventional "biographies of *virtuous* women" are rendered as a palimpsest on which the poet's double-edged criticism is inscribed. The lack of "virtue" in Chen's "portrait of women," in other words, forever underlines and undermines "'man's law'."

Paradoxically, woman's deviant sexuality becomes the way to usurp the very power that provokes it. The point is suggested in the mistress's gesture revealed as the man's view of "beauty": "—She steps onto the balcony, / Her hands basking on the balustrade, letting the wind slowly dry / Her ten desire-seething nail-polish in scarlets" (156-158). Here, makeup is again the focus of female disguise. As disguise "is one form of sexual freedom, power, and control" (Cullingford 211), makeup is a female artifice for manipulating man's dominance of woman. The mistress with polished finger nails is hence a woman handling the man's eye on her. She helps develop his sense of self not only by being a passive object through which he occasions his various roles. Also, she does so by actively setting the way he presents himself, as reflected by her stepping into the balcony. The mistress mounts the high stage for performing with her seductive nails, while the man standing below becomes the spectator awaiting his turn to participate in the show.

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[23] The idea is indebted to Angela Leighton's saying that "if men are the arbiters of virtue and vice, they are also the go-betweens." See her "'Because

The show is shot symbolically. What stands above is the implied poet's viewpoint that casts the two as an embodiment of "the whole nihilistic Taipei" (162) and, by analogy, of ultimate hollowness in relationships between unequals. The connection between the "portrait of a lady" and human relationships is obtained when the speaking voice betrays the poet's overtone. In the previous sequences, the conclusive views of "Taipei Man," as filtered by "the twenty-first century smoke," the "ticklish tomorrow," and the embrace "by one's own shadow," are all voiced from the stance of a tardy but wise critic. In other words, the implied poet's insight in the prenarrative is often revealed after the man, the woman, or both of them have their own words on the portrait. The portrait, as it were, is marked with the implied poet's ultimate confrontation with the lonely self. Chen first allows a certain partial view to enter the male or the female speaker's voice. Then, he shifts to his own voice, which invades and subverts the speaker's voice, thereby exposing the incompleteness of the lonely self.

The pattern coincides well with the shift from the first-person

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men made the laws'." Armstrong 355-356.

narrative to the third-person one. Just as "Portrait" comes gradually to focus on both "he" and "she," so the views of the man and woman are correspondingly contested and appropriated by the implied poet's. In the case of the poem as a whole, the last sequence of "Portrait" comes in order to elaborate and complicate the previous sequences. What has been revealed as the conflict with the opposite sex turns out to be with the same sex. Therefore, what has been divulged is not simply the self's confrontation with the other but with itself. The last sequence, "The Story of the Twin Laborer Girls," makes it clear that the lonely self is first of all the one unable to bear its own otherness.

This is suggested in the twin's antagonism to each other:

> Always seeing the ugly face of the self, they hideously
> Try to tear the other away,
> Suspecting that the other is only
> A repulsive mirror—thus reminded of the ecstasy of shattering.
> (163-166)

The girls' longing to "tear the other away" is provoked by their hatred of the self. Implicit in the paradox is yet another longing more unknowable to the girls: the desire for "shattering" the other is at the same time a desire for reconstructing the self. Twined with each other, the girls' presence is the result of their being split into two; they are always accompanied by the other images of themselves. To see the other as "a repulsive mirror" implies the self's anxiety of being thus misrecognized. The hideous hatred, so to speak, derives from the self's struggle with the other for recognition. Yet, the other is no one but the self's double. It is, hence, its own otherness with which the self finally is struggling.

This explains the twins' repulsion toward the mirror in the opening of the second stanza: "They no longer believed in the mirror since eight years of age" (167). In a sense, the twins are each other's mirrors. The disbelief suggests, then, the self's evasion from its image represented by the other. As such, the disbelief is preconditioned by the self's identification with the other's perception of itself. Paradoxically again, the disbelief is underlined by the belief in the other's potential to reflect and realize the self as a mirror does. Since the self cannot see itself except through a mirror, the self can only identify itself through a likeness, a reflection. Thus, it never recognizes but only misrecognizes itself.[24] In this light, the twins' dis/belief in a mirror sums up the self's "inner discrepancy and conflict" (Li Ruiten, "Mirrors" 125), namely, its difficulty in facing its own otherness that is disclosed through the other.

"We live in the image of others" (Seidler 4). Combined with Kerby's perception of narrative, Seidler's words can be expanded to say that the self has been both exposed to and characterized by a story about itself. To "tear," "shatter," and, hence, to destroy the other, is simultaneously to obliterate the viewpoints of the story and the self all together. The intimacy between the self and the other is most clearly in evidence when the twins' being neither with nor without each other shows up in their sadomasochism: "A kind of poignant pleasure in the pain of uprooting the [each other's] hair / They knew / And were addicted to it" (172-174).

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[24] See Easthope's explication of Lacan's perception of identity: "So I never recognize my self but only *misrecognize* myself." *Poetry as Discourse*

Needless to say, the sisters' perversity is indicative of a larger theme. Like the other ladies in the poem, they are presented to express the poet's study of the lonely self in a patriarchal society. Yet, a significant variation here helps intensify the depth of Chen's study. That is, the conflicts and alienation between the women themselves accentuate the forming of such loneliness. Apart from the twins' being both female, the variation is highlighted by their sexual involvement with the same man and belonging to the same class of labor. The female is relatively in a larger majority but absolutely underprivileged in the class. In fact, the variation is so arranged as to demonstrate the conflicts that are caused less by difference than by similarity and the resultant comparability. This could be illustrated through the twins' "accurately" (178) pointing to "(a young technician to their liking)" (179). Their unbending precision of single choice soon arouses a competition among the twins and the other laborer girls:

40.

> But they had only one scripture of menstruation. In the entire
>   zone of export processing,
> Thousands of gray and dusty flowers
> At the same night, only when the soft physiological pain came,
> Had fresh and blazing fluid flowing through
> Their withered and cracked ditches—after the moon flowed
>   away,
> They also discarded the period. (182-187)[25]

In these lines, Chen ironically reads gender, sexuality, and class together. To begin with, there is "only one scripture of menstruation." The scarcity on the girls' part stands in contrast to the amplitude hinted by the word "entire." Another contrast, however, is the outnumbered rate of one male technician to "thousands of" laborer girls. Apparently, all the girls are at odds with the male technician alone. The imbalance in quantity discloses sexism and patriarchal power in the workplace. Traditionally, it has often been the position that has made evident the institutionalized power of man over woman. Status at work mirrors the hegemony. In such a light, the girls' resort to their menstrual "scripture" indicates woman's desperate struggle against exploitation.

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[25] By "one scripture of menstruation" in the first one quoted here, Chen plays on the Chinese character 經 (jing). In Chinese, the characters for menstruation are 月經 (yuejing). Respectively written, 月 means moon and 經, holy writ. Chen deliberately uses the Chinese indefinite article for a single book to name menstruation, thereby alluding to the meaning of 經 as a scripture-like book.

In the end of the struggle, even the "scripture" itself has to be dismissed. As the lines reveal, the girls have finally ceased to menstruate at all: "after the moon flowed away, / They also discarded the period." Chen's juxtaposition of "moon" and "period" is remarkable here. Obviously, the menstrual "period" is associated with a woman's ovary and her fertility before she gets pregnant. The onset of menstruation, moreover, is periodic just like moon's waxing. In fact, the Chinese compound noun for menstruation uses the character that alone can signify moon.[26] In addition to the linguistic aspect, "period" and "moon" echo each other in the aspects of shape and recurrent cycle. The moon's "flow[ing]" and waning away thus indicates woman's ovulation, the termination of her period, and eventually, her pregnancy. In view of the conventional connotation of "moon," pregnancy may signal woman's entering into another period in anticipation of whatever is less romantic and virginal. The implication is greatly heightened when "the entire zone of export processing" is referred to. In a sense, the girls are the laborers who export ova and have them processed during their intercourse with sperms. The finished product is, of course, the baby. Inasmuch as the girls are part of the production, they are reified, deprived of individuality and vitality as the image of "thousands of gray and dusty flowers" evinces. Taking into account their youth, the girls' pregnancy stands finally for their precocious confrontation with the unnatural reality.

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[26] See note 25.

To some extent, the doomed confrontation originates both from woman's utilizing her own body and her acquiescence to man's "sexual exploitativeness" (Pinkney 56) of it. The laborers use their ova alone to rival one another in order to get the numerous sperms, while the men they are engaged with simply take advantage of the girls' competition. The astounding line in the stanza following the one quoted above is pierced with the poignant irony: "The man says that he cannot distinguish her from her" (188). Both of the twins offer themselves to the man, who then inscribes his excuse on the bodies he has driven through. Ridiculous and deceptive as it is, the excuse is received without much resistance. Immediately following the man's comment is the pregnant twin's taking a walk "on the Hualian seashore" (189) with the other "unmarried mothers" (189). Such a transition is deliberately abrupt. It is as if woman's being deserted were likewise precipitate and unavoidable. Where man can easily pass beyond the outcome of sexuality, woman has to pay greatly. The inherent inequality can be further illustrated through a look at the "seashore."

To people in Taiwan, Hualian, a county lying off the Pacific Ocean, is one of the few lands that have preserved their natural beauty. It is often referred as a virgin territory when compared to the industrialized cities in the coastal east of the island, Taipei, in particular. In this regard, the pregnant twin's presence "on the Hualian seashore" is quite significant.

On the one hand, it suggests woman's return to productive nature. On the other hand, however, it expresses, ironically, the loss of her "feminine virginity" (de Beauvoir 155). After her "'defloration'" (de Beauvoir 155), she is banishment from Taipei, the manufacturing industry where she earns her living. The destination of her arrival thus designates, up to a point, the destiny of fallen woman. The woman who falls short of the "moral law" has to suffer her "removal from the construction of civilizations" (Kanneh 142). "She is fated to be subjected, owned, exploited like the Nature . . . " (de Beauvoir 73).

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir, expanding on Levi-Strauss,[27] associates the binary opposition of nature versus culture in the primitive societies with that of man and woman in "the patriarchal regime" (154). Like culture and nature, "male and female stand opposed" (xxv). Man digs into Nature to install Culture. By analogy, man breaks woman's "hymen" in order to possess "the feminine body" (de Beauvoir 155). In this light, Chen also employs the opposition to expose man's violation of woman. Just as woman is more empathetic with nature, so man is relatively more aligned with civilization and urbanity. This view, in fact, underscores the narrative of "Portrait." Throughout the poem,

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[27] According to de Beauvoir, she has "used liberally" the "proofs" of Lévi-Strauss' work *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*. One proof is apparently this conclusion from Lévi-Strauss: "'Passage from the state of Nature to the state of Culture is marked by man's ability to view biological relations as a series of contrasts . . . .'" See her *The Second Sex* xxiii.

Taipei has been the locus of the conflicts between man and woman. Also, the masculine gaze at the female body persists. Implicitly, man is placed at the center, while woman is at a margin for observation. The pregnant twin's displacement to Hualian exemplifies man's taking hold of the capital city and accordingly, "the construction of civilizations." Since the female body is physically penetrated and, for the most part, fragmented in the masculine eye, the displacement indicates woman's giving way to man's dismembering power. In a way, the man's impregnating the twin bespeaks his success of deforming her body.[28]

A parallel and even more pointed evidence of the deformation is the other twin's "floating in the culvert of the city" (197). In very much the same spirit, her ending in the "culvert" of Taipei signifies the exclusion of the fallen into the underworld of civilization. Moreover, her body is not only deformed but also destroyed. "On the anatomy table surrounded by taboos" (200), the following lines read, "the medical students in the laboratory class, / Because of finding a misshapen and ruptured womb, / Burst out a metal-sharp joyous exclamation . . . " (201-203). The scene is strikingly cruel not just because of the words written down but of those on the underside of them. All that appear unsaid are laid open by the students' "metal-sharp" laugher: scalpel, incision, bloody mutilation, and, in short, the cool violence done to a female body. The twin's "misshapen and ruptured womb" is welcomed for its usage of practicing dissection, or, for the chance of raping her flesh. "The boundaries of my body," Susan Brison remarks, "are also the boundaries of my self. My skin surface shields me against the external world" (18). The twin's bodily dismemberment "on the anatomy table" repeats therefore the self's exposure to violation. In this view, the "exclamation," like any other libidinous outburst, serves to disguise the sly taste of the tantalizing "taboos." What remains on the other side of the outcry is the silence of trespassing upon the corporeal ground of the female self. The twin's body, in Brison's words, is "used as men's language" (25). Continually pierced through after death, the body becomes the naked site upon which the men carve their sexuality. Sex is again interrelated with death as it is in the prologue. But the suggestion is no longer man's helplessness at woman's change. As repetition in "the repetitious anatomy of the bodies" is altered into abnormality in "the anatomy table surrounded by taboos," the suggestion is now of man's imposing the change clandestinely.

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[28] In fact, the imagery of dismembered and deformed bodies is quite common in Chen's poems. This may be partly because of his occupation as an

The violent change also befalls the pregnant twin. Since she is abandoned for pregnancy, her body is guilefully violated by the man who is unable, or, unwilling, to distinguish the twins. "Her youngest belly" (191) in this respect results from the man's prostitution of her body. More broadly, the twin, though alive, exists no longer as a person in her own right. She carries with her the aftermath of casual sex: "The

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eye doctor. See Zhang Fengling 54.

becoming of round shape demands trying pains— / For the first time, she feels being a woman, / The agony sufficient to weigh down the spine in woman's life" (192-194). The equations of pregnancy to "pains" as well as woman to "agony" are obvious here. The twin's body, to quote Lionnet, "thereby becomes a text on which pain can be read as . . . a way of being" (88). Pregnancy demands the twin to live with the other within the self. The "becoming," is, hence, "a directional force" (Watts 85) not only towards the future. In anticipating a being born into the world, it recalls also the self's disappointed striving for being with the other. The twin's intercourse with the man does not end in union and completeness as "the round shape" ironically implies. Instead, she is left alone.

The twin's "trying pains" for the "round shape" embodies thus the oppression of the forlorn in its full sense. At one point in Eliot's "Portrait," the lady is seen to fiddle with the blooming lilacs while talking to the man that "youth is cruel" (48). Her "(slowly twist[ing] the lilac stalks" (46), in Tony Pinkney's interpretation, is an image that "records the ache of subjection and revolt against social constraint" (51). The image "itself reveals the lady as ineluctably written by a social text which exceeds and escapes her" (51). The comparable image in "Story" is the twin's putting up with "the agony that is sufficient to weigh down the spine in woman's life." As the spine is weighed down, the subject is bowed. Alone with the load of the "round shape," the twin also suffers the agony of subjection and remaining "upright" on her own. Where "social morality" is based on the "sexual propriety of women," the twin's identifiable status as an unmarried mother stands invariably for her "moral downfall" (Leighton 353). The twin's own body betrays her. Granted that the body is "the enduring locus to which a life history accrues" (111) as Kerby believes, the twin is fated to bear the *embodied* scandal.

Notably, being so inescapably confined, the twin, "for the first time," "feels being a woman." Woman, as it were, is associated, or, identical with oppression. Since her self-awareness comes after her pregnancy by the man who then deserts her, being a woman is at the same time being abandoned to live, alone, with the other within the self. The characteristics of the lonely self are concluded in the last stanza:

> Oh, one mirror, like
> A life, lives in two bodies at the same time.
> Now she believes
> She and her sister are the same human.
> She sheds tears and believes this myth—one human.
> Now, it is she
> And the baby in her belly. (204-210)

The lonely self is simultaneously split and dispersed. This could be explained by dividing the stanza into two parts. The first one contains the idea that "one life" "lives in two bodies," while the second, two lives live in the same body. The first refers to the twins. It condenses into a discreet understanding of "the same human," a mutation in contrast to the early enmity between the sisters. The second refers to the pregnant sister with "the baby in her belly" and retells her ending up with "one human." Throughout, the stanza conveys the twin's learning of the self's perpetual loneliness.

The two parts are linked mainly by the resemblance of a mirror to a life. Interestingly, it is "life," an abstract rather than a concrete noun, that is assigned to carry the function of vehicle in a trope. In reversing the conventional employment, Chen puts stress on the mirrored life rather than the life itself. In other words, a simulacrum of reality is substituted for reality to be representative of the real. In view of the image "mirror," the idea of (mis)recognition is again at work here. For the "mirror" here is reminiscent of those which bear also the "round shape" in the sequence: "moon," "womb," and "belly." By analogy, menstruation, rupture, pregnancy, betrayal and abandonment are drawn together. Together with its first association with the twin's hatred of each other, the mirror reflects the self's multifarious relationship with the other.

First, there is the twins' anxious concern of being mistaken for each other and the resultant clash between themselves. The self and its double is separated and so, split. As the twins are involved with the same man, their separation is accelerated through their longing to be recognized individually. Consequently, their self-identity is mediated through the man's view of them. Since the man cannot distinguish them, both of the twins are misrecognized. Another misrecognition soon follows, namely, that man's intercourse with woman is conducted under the patriarchal presumption of his authority over woman. After the twins surrender their bodies, they are dismissed. So treated, they are identified as the fallen women. The subsequent misrecognition is, however, the only identity they can have in the society that often privileges man's sexuality at the sacrifice of the woman's. The imposed identification thus eliminates the possibility of one's "be[ing] *oneself* even to oneself" (Brison 14). The "fallen" woman is always accompanied by the other's contempt at her. On one side, there is her own image of herself; on the other, the image in opposition to hers. The self is exposed to incongruent images and, so, dispersed.

The baby in transition manifests the self's split and dispersion. Sharing the mother's life, the unborn baby remains part of the self. Once being born into the world, it becomes nevertheless the other. For the mother, the baby both is and is not the self. The baby, moreover, is reminiscent of all that results in and from its very being and, consequently, of the experienced betrayal, regret, and disgrace. What has been taking form within the self is entangled with the other's transformation of the self. The self is accompanied and shadowed by its other self. Abandoned, it is indeed together with "one human" and that is no one but itself.

It turns out that the self is lonely without the other and lonelier after being with it. The twin "shed tears and believes this myth" "now." Embedded within a third-person context, the "now" is meaningful and functional in the implied poet's ventriloquism of the twin's belief. Ushered in by the apostrophe "Oh," it is even more inseparable from the poet's moment of narrating.[29] As such, the "now" designates not so much the present moment of the twin's saying the belief as that of the implied poet's reiterating this belief. In a word, the twin's understanding is "now" presented to conclude "Story." Since "Story" is the last sequence of "Portrait," the conclusion prepared over a series of portraits comes also "now" to sum up the poem.

Thus, "one human" figures not only the twin laborer girls but also the other portrayed ladies. As they are more or less engaged with the men in Taipei, it refers extensively to human relationships in the urban Taiwan. In terms of sex, the relationship is manifested through the bodily contact between man and woman. Circumscribed by the internalization of patriarchy, it is furthermore featured by the betrayal of the body to sexual domination. The self is thereby doomed to isolation. Where the self apprehends itself, there is always the other within and beside it. The self's inability to reach promising union with the other outside is predetermined by its failure to acknowledge the other within. The reification of woman's body and subjectivity bespeaks exactly the self's suppression of its other self. As the other outside is objectified, so the subject's contact with it is discriminated and, its returning approach to itself, rendered incomplete. From the perverted "I" to the forlorn "she,"

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[29] The idea is illustrated in the previous chapter of the dissertation.

"Taipei Man" has continued to suffer from deception and oppression. The spell of desolation is such that no one can escape from it.

Accordingly, neither man nor woman can remain untouched by Chen's "portrait of ladies." Throughout the poem, Chen has carefully balances sympathy against irony. The male speaker's deriding observation of woman is redeemed by the implied poet's sympathetic voice, which makes audible not only the speaker's prejudice but also his self-alienation for being fettered by patriarchy. Correspondingly, the illustration of woman's servility is compensated through the betrayal by her own vanity. Even where the women's misfortunes are pronounced to be the most pitiable as the twins' are, Chen insists on a subtle nuance to hint at their partial responsibility—the twins' "*accurately* pointing to" (emphasis added) the same technician, for example. Man and woman are thus at once criticized and sympathized with; their contending perspectives of each other, appropriated. Consequently, the self is constructed out of the dialectic between the views of the speakers and the implied poet. The resultant identity is neither male nor female but the two sexes meeting in the lonely self. In this respect, woman is a poetic icon that enables Chen to initiate his first drawing of loneliness in the human relationship. Like the portraits written by Williams, Pound, and Eliot, Chen's is of the lady, but she is by no means the only one that has been revealed.

Chapter Four
The Played Self:
A Study of Feng Qing's "The Actress"

I

Feng Qing's "The Actress" deals with the issues of representation, identity, and exile viewed subjectively from a female perspective.[1] The poem delves into cinematic production of femininity and personal resistance within patriarchal confinement. Basically, "The Actress" is a poem marked with a woman's "struggle for subjectivity" (Li Yuanzhen, "Self-Perception" 26)[2] in hegemonic discourse. The female self's striving in such prenarrative for identification is implicitly encoded in the title. The actress in the poem is in a constant state of crossing the borders of the self and the other, the past and the present, fiction and reality, as well as multiple images of woman. She acts out the role designated by the film script. As such, it is not herself that is finally presented. The self is displaced by the other, by the embodied ideology that presumes its identity to be a patriarchal portrait of woman. Considering her starring in a doomed romance that carries her away into her own past love, the actress, in Kerby's words, has been "always already caught up in a story, already involved in a drama of some sort" (7). Both in the film script and memory, the self is acted upon to play a submissive role.

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[1] "The Actress" is first collected in Feng Qing's *Running Fire on the Snowfield*. She revises the poem slightly and collects it again in *A Happy or Unhappy Fish*. In this chapter, the translation and quotations of the poem are based on the first version in *Running Fire* 44-52.

[2] Li Yuanzhen, a scholar-critic, employs the phrase to supplement "embrace of love" and "endurance of maternity." According to Li, these three motifs are typical of the female poet's revelation of the inner self in modern Taiwan poetry. See her "Self-Perception," 25-26.

The poem is thus read as Feng Qing's negotiation of the relation between femininity and patriarchy. The actress' inner drama is only one more instance of *her* story. Her anxiety at the director's instruction signals the repressive effect of the patriarchal assumption that underlines the script. In the meantime, her continual drifting away from the romantic plot denotes the pervasive nature of patriarchy she strives to counteract. "The Actress" is imbued with many conflicts and contradictions. In this spirit, the poem is a counterpart of Chen's "Portrait." "The Actress" examines also woman's taking the body, the "'focal point'" of oppression, as the same site for "'struggles over the shape of power'" (Johnson qtd. in Bordo 16). Rather than mediated through a male viewpoint, however, the resistance is witnessed this time from a female perspective.

In fact, the actress' border-crossing takes place in the present of a female narrating voice. The poem begins with an account of a "close-up" of the actress' running. In this way, Feng Qing simultaneously locates her narrator as both the creator of the primary narrative and the viewer of the embedded narrative, that is, the fiction of the film. The actress' state of mind in and out of the latter, moreover, is sometimes followed so subtly as to betray the narrator's underlying claim of identification with her. Who is speaking is accordingly unsure at a certain moment. The poem is an utterance, but it is uttered by a voice of indefinite status. The voice figures therefore the female self that emerges from a borderland. "A borderland," Gloria Anzaldua observes, "is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (3). The ambiguity of locality corresponds to woman's difficulty in positioning the self in a patriarchal society. In other words, the speaking voice in "The Actress" manifests the self's struggle against the patriarchal confines for subjectivity.

The shifting and transitional identities of the speaking voice bring into view an exiled self. Seeing voice as an "aural signature of identity" (13), Patrick O'Donnell associates it with body: "voice must be cast from bodies: voice in itself is also a form of separation" (19). Separation, viscerally, is displacement, exile. And "exile, in its broader sense," David Bevan claims, "is not only a specific historical circumstance" (3); "political displacement may be merely . . . an image of some other form of estrangement: womanhood . . . and sundry further estates of marginality" (3). In this respect, the voice of "The Actress" expresses woman's "estrangement" within patriarchal constraints.

Similar to Luo Men's veteran in "Sonata," the actress does not belong to "here" and "now." Her self is elsewhere on the move. Its mind settles neither totally there in the past memory nor totally here in the present instant of acting. However, unlike the veteran whose projection of nostalgia is centered around home, both physical and spiritual, the actress running at the beginning of the poem has never dwelled at home. Home, the metaphor for "given certitudes and stable identity" (Papastergiadis 170), is absent in the narrative. On the contrary, there are uncertainty, ambiguity, and mutability. A strong sense of "pain and uncanniness" (Feng Qing 43) is everywhere in the actress' helpless struggle with patriarchy. The shifting voice betrays the suppressed yearning for an alternative. Instead of return, the voice calls for retreat and emancipation. The actress' exile in the various borders suggests thus woman's search for autonomy and independence.

In a sense, "The Actress" is as political as Luo Fu's "Totem" is. According to Claire Colebrook, representation is essentially "a powerful political act" (199). Feng Qing's narration implies a subversive attempt. The actress' border-crossing is narrated and represented by an ambiguous speaking voice. By simultaneously incorporating and disfiguring the voice, Feng Qing allows the female perspective to fade in and out in accordance with the director's "orders" (2). The "orders" are given to carry out the director's own stress on "illusion" (38) and "representation" (40). Following the director's instruction, the actress' performance demonstrates the male's manipulation of femininity. Her "sneak[ing]" (44) away from the aggressive overtone, on the contrary, not only exposes patriarchal dictatorship but also calls into question the claimed authority of patriarchy over female subjectivity. The implicit competing forces of power and resistance are likewise examined in "Totem." "Totem" ends when the "I" of the speaker is enabled through the historical sense to identify with the "I" of the implied poet that is written into the preface. When the speaker finally goes through the representational complex of the "totem," the complex that passes itself off as "non-political" is undermined. The common predicament of an individual's confrontation with public hegemonic discourse is disclosed in Lou Fu and Feng Qing.

In Feng Qing, of course, the predicament is underscored by the ongoing history of withstanding patriarchal restrictions. The actress' resistance against patriarchal boundaries epitomizes the feminine "struggle for subjectivity." Overall, her striving is carried on through her playing the submissive role inscribed in the script. It is based on this context that the played self is observed in "The Actress." The actress takes part in the discursive practice that apparently opposes the struggle. The action itself is contradictory just as its agent is. The self strives to defy the ideology that underwrites the role it is demanded to play. In other words, the practice is more than a site of deprivation; it is read also as a site for producing a counter discourse. But this resistance must be sustained in the recitation of the script. While the echo may resemble in words the oppressive narrative, it is tuned with defiant overtones. The counteraction, moreover, is activated when the self performs. When the self is not itself and yields to no one but the role, the action can then be put into practice. However, insofar as the self relies on the cinematic text, into which it enters as a part, i.e. as a heroine in the fiction, it is played by what gives rise to its own rebellion.

A reading of the female speaker's soliloquy in Anne Sexton's "The Play" helps to understand the actress' paradox. Sexton's view of herself may be applied to the speaker's presence in the poem: "'I am an actress in my own autobiographical play'" (qtd. in McClatchy 250).[3] "The play" as an underlying metaphor of life suggests the speaker's elusive identity in the shifting modes of showing. Besides self-representation, the speaker's lines cut across gender identity and estrangement. Just exactly how the lines are uttered links the speaking voice here to that in "The Actress."

Seeing her life as a play, the speaker places the self at the center of the existential drama. Obliged to "give speeches" (Sexton 15) not totally of her own making,[4] the speaker nevertheless articulates her subjection in human relationships. The contradictory position rehearses the problematic construction of femininity. Naming woman as an "actor" (1), the speaker already renders her identity dubious. In fact, the played self in Sexton is also revealed. The female voice finds itself incarcerated in the lines underscored by a patriarchal intent. It has to pronounce them to make the public appearance of its femininity. Reverberated with the articulation, however, is the soliloquy that recalls, anticipates, and criticizes the affected femininity. The juxtaposition of acting and thinking both retains and subverts patriarchal discourse. In this way, the self contests the lines it has to recite rather than simply enacts them. It is consequently veiled behind its very showing.

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[3] According to J. D. McClatchy, Sexton describes herself this way in a poetry recital.

[4] "The Play" is cited from Sexton's *The Complete Poems* 440-441.

"The Play" thus dwells also on the female "struggle for subjectivity." The speaker's self-awareness of performing originates a voice that oscillates between disclosure and concealment in a way similar to that in "The Actress." The difference is that the voice here is not vibrant under the ambiguous status of its speaker. In brief, the voice in "The Play" is that of the speaker's; it expresses her own struggle. In "The Actress," the speaker's voice is, for the most part, that of the narrator's; the voice is tinged with the actress' monologue. Since the narrator can occasionally observe the actress from a distance, the vicariously experienced struggle can also be reviewed later from a contested standpoint. The tension inherent in the voice complicates the relation among identity, exile, and representation. Obviously, "The Play" is concerned with this kind of relation too. A comparison between the two poems will help specify the speaking voice in "The Actress." Throughout the following sections, therefore, the focus will be on the articulation of the played self in "The Actress" with a reference to its variation in "The

Play."

II

"The Actress" is introduced with a voice that addresses an immediate spotlight of the actress' acting:

> At that time, the downpour becomes serious.
> The director orders a close-up running after the beauty on the
> beach
> To face your profile of suffering with artistic creation.
> If panned wide, the shot can still catch
> The rushing surf in the mind
> And the whimpering she-oak played by the gale. (1-6)

The opening stanza is composed of several perspectives. In the foreground, there is the "close-up" of the "profile." The animate image of the "beauty" is framed by a tracking shot. Outside the frame, a moving camera eye at the service of the director is watching the "suffering" facial expression. Apparently, "woman as image, man as bearer of the look" (Mulvey 162) is presented here. The actress is asked to display the director's "artistic creation" of the screened femininity. The "exhibitionist role" (Mulvey 162) the director has cast the actress into is, hence, a scene of instruction.

Thus, an alternative reading of the "suffering beauty" is suggested.

The reading occurs not only vaguely in the actress' mind but also clearly in the narrator's. The speaking voice here is capable of detecting and associating sound and image. The "whimpering" is heard amid the "gale" and "downpour" to summon the speechless "rushing." Altogether, these images of sounds are visualized to bring into view not only the scenes focused by the camera but also those off camera. In the first case, the voice empathizes with the actress and turns the narrative almost into self-address. In the second, the voice tells a broader horizon of "your profile," which rebounds on the masculine gaze at woman. Slightly to one side of the actress, the gaze adopts an oblique position that implies its prejudice. Not "panned wide," the gaze fails to catch what lies outside the "close-up." Its angle of view is furthermore limited. It falls short of a close reading of the woman's mind. The "artistic creation" becomes all the more questionable when the framing of woman's image is found to be embedded within the narrator's scope of vision. What is uttered, therefore, is the female perspective of the gaze and the setting beyond the gaze. Namely, the speaking voice interrogates not only the limited view of femininity but also the production of it. Feng Qing's opening scene of "suffering beauty" invites, hence, the reading that femininity results perhaps from determining woman's objective—from *directing* her to "run after" her image in the masculine eye, for example.

A similar reading is suggested also in Sexton's "The Play." Like the actress, the speaker identifying herself with an actor is obliged to play a role and follow directions. Her beginning soliloquy asserts a self-identity: "I am the only actor" (1). But her presence belies the affirmation by its continuous posturing before "the hands":

> My running after the hands
> and never catching up.
> (The hands are out of sight—
> that is, offstage.)
> All I am doing onstage is running.
> running to keep up,
> but never making it. (6-12)

The single-voiced expression suggests a tension between itself and the force outside. Conspicuously, "the hands" indicate the force outside the self that is definitely unattainable but persistently demanded: it is "out of sight" and yet omnipresent in effect. In a way, the function of "the hands" is similar to that of the director in "The Actress." "The hands" remain "offstage" just as the director is off camera, behind the scene. Both are able to exert their influence on the acting from a distance. While "the play" is performed on stage, "the hands" are presumably the "clapping hands" (Capo 36) which give applause and approval. They are the metonymy of "the offstage audience" (Capo 36). When "the play" means life itself, "the hands" appear like the index of God. God is indeed mentioned in the last stanza.[5] Thus, the speaker's declaration, "the play is my life" (4), anticipates the association: the ending of the play is that of the actor's life; the audience's evaluation, the final judgment. Based on her self-consciousness of being a "woman" (2), the speaker's running intimates a fatal "quest for" (Kumin xxix) "the male Other . . . in the person of the patriarchal final arbiter" (xxix-xxx). She cannot help identifying herself through masculine appraisal. So long as "the hands" are always out of reach, the recognition is unrealizable and the concomitant identification, incomplete and illusory.

In this respect, the speaker running after "the hands" is, in fact, chased by her awareness that she has been watched by a masculine eye. "The hands" are making a plot of her performance. Put differently, "representation as the ordering of a present space . . . by an absent space" (Thiher 178) is shown here.[6] The speaker is handled to display the femininity she feels estranged from. Like the actress, she experiences a sense of alienation while acting the play. This is further implied by her anxiety at not being able to present the self otherwise: "All I am doing on stage is running." The monotonous movement of running assumes, paradoxically, the inertness of her action. As it is in "The Actress," the running in "The Play" has a similar analogue in reality. That is, woman senses her taking part in the "feminine confinement" (Capo 34) she has been struggling with.

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[5] In lines 25-26, the speaker says, "To be without God is to be a snake / who wants to swallow an elephant."

[6] Here, Allen Thiler borrows from Derrida's view of "classical representation" to characterize "the tyranny of representation." See *Words in Reflection* 178.

Correspondingly, self-contradiction is expressed by the voice that shuttles between the speaker's acting and thinking. Such a shift continues to work in the second stanza of "The Actress." The line immediately following the first stanza smacks of ambiguity: "I think the more proper explanation is pain" (7). Who is the "I" that gives the explanation? What is explained? Between "beauty" and "suffering," the speaking voice seems to emphasize the latter. In a way, it reiterates the actress' painful endurance of the acting. The "I" sounds as if it were addressing a comment, an argument, or a line in the script. There is no transition to make the speaker and the narrative known. Not until several lines later is the "I" referred to again: "'I think the more proper way is to control pain, / Not feeling anxious'" (24-25). Yet, this statement is unclear too. It is quoted and taken almost out of context; except for "a long rain-damped letter" (15), there is no sufficient clue as to where it comes from. Even the hint is equivocal. Whether the letter is recalled in memory or supplied as one of the cinematic properties is indeterminate. Through the quotation, therefore, the voice in the presence of "I" has entered layers of narrative. As the division of the layers is indistinct, so is the self constructed by the narrative.

The relation between the self and the narrative is likewise obscure.

A look at the whole quotation is critical to exploring the intricacy:

> "No, we all have experienced
> The similar plot and story.
> After that accident,
> I again understand
> That love needs energy.
> Dear,
> No matter who we are,
> We are actually like others.
> I think the more proper way is to control pain,
> Not feeling anxious." (16-25)

Apparently, the quotes are full of missing accounts. "The similar plot and story" as well as "that accident" are mentioned without references. However, the omission coincides with the evasive tone and the restraint the addresser means to instill in the addressee. The addresser deliberately avoids mentioning the fact of "that accident" while persuading the addressee "not" to treat it in an emotional way. Read together with the earlier, unquoted line, "we have to shorten the time for love to spare it for life" (8), the quoted words are found to meander tangentially around the love relationship between the addresser and the addressee. Due to the characterized passivity of woman, it is more possible for man to be the speaking subject here. Hence, man talks and woman listens.

Following the focus on the actress's acting in the opening scene, the quotes could be consequently read as the lines in the script. The female character is listening or reading the male character's words. Or rather, she is recalling the words she received before. In the light of the narrator's previous probing into the actress' mind, moreover, the lines could also occur in the actress' actual life. The lines remind her of the words she was once told or written. The way to interpret the quotation might be multiplied if the logic of "both" is considered according to that of "either/or." Hence, a flashback is triggered on the spot of playing. The actress is thinking of her own past at the same time when she plays the role that evokes it. The remembered past, to borrow from Dorrit Cohn, "therefor lie[s] at a double retrospective remove" (186) from the quotation. The addressed words in quotation—the recording of a love story—are embedded within the script, which is itself inserted into a larger frame—the actress' love story in the past. Similar to "The Play," "The Actress" associates life with the script/play.

The association broadens the scope of the narrative in its entirety. As disclosed in the quotation, the narrative of "The Actress" comprises several layers that overlap with one another. Such correlation reveals the actress' border-crossing, on the one hand, and the ultimate dissolving of the boundary between life and the script, on the other. From the lines in quotation to the remembered event in reality, the actress has at once engaged in "the literal and metaphorical crossing"

(Henderson, "Introduction" 10) of textual and temporal borders. Whence and when the borderlines start remain obscure. Accordingly, there can be no base to distinguish reality from fiction, the real from the represented, and the played role from the playing self. The result is an incorporation of art into life and vice versa. The "artistic creation" of the film evokes and acts upon the actress' lived experience. Is it so or is it the life experience that produces and renders the playing? The ambiguity arises because the acting itself is a retrieval of the agent. The actress both interprets and is interpreted by her acting.

This point helps clarify the relation between the quotation and the "I" outside it. As mentioned above, "I think the more proper explanation is pain" resembles "'I think the more proper way is to control pain, / Not feeling anxious.'" The latter "I" referring to the man who speaks or writes in the quotation is anticipated by the former female "I" outside it. The quotation, moreover, appears either in the script or in the memory. No matter which is the case, it is embedded and belongs to the subordinate diegetic level. Though appearing later, the quotation is recalled by the female "I" positioned earlier in the primary narrative. The similar wording witnesses the retrospection. In other words, the quotation passes through the mind of the outside "I" at a time when it looks back on the context from which the quotation emerges. In the course of narrating, therefore, the "I" summons the ideas in the quotation. However, this "I" disagrees with the male "I" by slightly modifying the latter's wording. In this respect, the double voices of the female "I" are interrelated. The narrating self is interpreting the experiencing self's reading of the quotation. To be more specific, the narrator interprets the actress' reflection upon the quotation that is addressed to her, during the acting or in her own past. The speaking voice in the presence of the outside "I" thus articulates a superimposed stance toward the masculine speech.

On the surface, the stance indicates the actress' afterthought of the quotes. "To control pain" is "not feeling anxious" as the man explains; in fact, it is "pain" itself. The first view means to dismiss "pain," which, however, is picked up in the latter that disavows the view by leaving out the word "control." Most likely, the actress feels "pain" when the required "control" is brought to mind. In her recollection, the "control" is relieved and the quotes recited. She is suggested to examine her suffering role in the face of a male figure. To some extent, she is also the reader of the played self. The quotation is meant to assimilate the addressee into the man's "understand[ing]" of "love." Besides, the act of quoting is capable of changing the addressee into a subject in a double sense. According to Antony Easthope, "A reader . . . is always positioned in enunciation as its subject . . . just as actors . . . produce a play from a script" (46-47). Borrowing the words from the quotation, the actress becomes its reader and, as a result, the subject of the quotes that ask for her subjection. In this way, she makes herself one of "the perennial captives of masculine speech" (Knoepflmacher 152). However, in altering the words slightly but crucially, she proves herself to be a deviator. Thus, "pain" itself bears on the actress' suffering from the "struggle for subjectivity."

"Pain" is furthermore the anxiety that is denied in the quotation; the man's saying "not feeling anxious" emphasizes instead the addressee's restless mind. Indeed, the contrasting significance of the words within and outside the quotation is what lies latent in the similar wording. Correspondingly, the two "I's" within and outside stand on opposing sides. Stated otherwise, the voice wearing the same pronoun "I" shuttles between the sides. "The dual trajectory from 'in' to 'out'" (Papastergiadis 104) is therefore equally presented. The shuttling movement is not only forward to break away but also backward to plunge into the quoted words. Namely, the articulation evinces not only the actress' struggle but also the narrator's inquiry into it. The speech that impinges upon the actress' consciousness is investigated. The quotation mark itself demonstrates the same point. In Thiher's words, "straight quotation . . . is often sufficient to invest language with an ironic dimension" (185). Put in quotation, the masculine speech is not merely relayed by the actress to herself; it is repeated ironically and rendered ridiculous by the narrator. Taking into account the reiteration, the voice tracks down the actress' restricted self as well as what prevents the self from being emancipated.

What remains relentlessly dominant, to borrow from Colebrook, is "a desire to interpret all events within a single system" (213-214). The system, as revealed in the "straight quotation," is determined by patriarchal prejudice. Notice that the "more proper way" is deduced from "the similar plot and story." In disproving the addressee, the man resorts to the represented scenario of reality that is itself "already representational" (Colebrook 227). The fabricated is drawn upon to authenticate the real, not the other way around. The reversal is, then, an effect of a presupposed ideology. Thus, the man is aligned with dogmatism. This is also suggested by the comment, "this is a customary topic" (26), which comes immediately after the quotes. The "customary" is too conventional to go beyond certain limits. A "theme" defined as such derives probably from habitual mode of thinking. What is said in the quotation is thus considered to be "repetition within conventions" (Papastergiadis 106). The masculine speech is therefore characteristic of a unilateral stereotype.

In this respect, the actress' struggle is also for linguistic autonomy, a need to verbalize her own interpretation of the script. In fact, throughout "The Actress," Feng Qing has put the actress in the peril of falling into an imposed perception. The whole poem contains a critique of the script, or, the film that duplicates patriarchal values. According to this value system, woman signifies passivity and lack of speaking position. She is the one who is "spoken, not speaking," and whose image is "controlled, not controlling" (Silverman 223). Thus, several instances of man's compelling authority are found in "The Actress." In lines 39-40, the emphasis on "representation" is "underrepresentation or even misrepresentation" (Xi Mi, "From the Margin" xliii) in disguise: "The director once again emphasizes / It should be like a representation of a simulated experience." The "simulated" depiction of the lived "experience" is taken as a subsequent basis for the "representation." In the absence of what is supposedly being represented, the "representation" originates actually from the director's own perception of the experience; the "representation" is, then, an effect of submitting the actress to the command he verbally places on her acting. In line 67, considerable poignancy filters through the assigned pattern of showing: "The director again demonstrates the same embrace and love-making." Here, the authority locates its power in the realm of sexuality. This is likewise the case in a few lines later: "The director yells. / You should memorize and transmit / The pollen of intimacy" (73-5). Elsewhere, the authority is exercised in the domain of intercourse. A spectacular instance is the slogan-like "premise": "You have to . . . listen . . . . / The premise he sets at the other end of the telephone is / We all have to think in a better way!" (88-90). The "premise" imparts an overtone of reduction. The man's saying is wrapped up within the manufactured language that precludes interchanges.

In these speeches, man's mental and physical exertion is "again" and "once again" conveyed through such active verbs as "emphasize," "demonstrate," "yell," "listen," "should," and "have to." The actress' efforts and answers are on the contrary not expressed at all. The mood of the verbs indicates what is called the "silencing opposition" in relation to "modern exile" (Papastergiadis 9).[7] Exile in this sense is keyed to the displacement from a "subject-position" (Silverman 201) in utterance or speech. In taking note only of the man's words, the voice manifests the actress' subordinate status. The more clearly the masculine speech is reported, the more evidently the actress' being acted upon and lapsing into insignificance are conveyed. Her presence is implied by the speech that is flung to her rather than enunciated by herself through any word in reply. "The self," as Thiher explicates Emile Benveniste, "arises from the individual act of discourse" (135). During the one-sided, indisputable direction, the actress' self has been subdued. Her identity is indeed that of a character; it is characterized by and for the male viewers that foster the ideological practice of patriarchy.

III

Consequently, "'women continue to become woman'" (de Lauretis qtd. in Hogue 10). "Woman is present" in the service of patriarchal hierarchy; but "women are absent" in their independence of it. This explains why the female voice in "The Actress" is essentially divided and ambiguous. The poet multiplies woman through the split. By filtering into the voice the presence of another female speaker, Feng Qing discloses the various stances of the women. The actress' estrangement from her role registers the existences of the character, the actress that is cast into it, the self evoked by associate memory, and the self looks back on that moment of acting. Mediated through the narrator's viewpoint, the existences are furthermore doubled. The voice repeatedly shuttling between the actress and the narrator uncovers, hence, the "sentimental plot" (96) that is fabricated to homogenize femininity. The actress' acting is concomitantly shown to be both a receptive and defiant activity. It is receptive because of the indispensable "representation" and defiant in the way the acting re-presents the predetermined plot. Truly, the playing self is confronted with the played self. This section will focus on the conflict and the venturing of the voice into the actress' mind to discover her clash with herself.

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[7] Niko Papastergiadis's view of "modern exile" is worthy of quoting here: "Modern exile is not exclusively confined to the massive displacement of peoples from their homelands but can also be located in the specific forms of silencing opposition without explanation." *Modernity as Exile* 9.

The articulation of the inner conflict might be clarified by giving an ear to the actor's "speeches" (15) in "The Play." In the second stanza, a new phase of movement begins. The action of "running after" gives way to that of giving "speeches": "Suddenly I stop running. / (This moves the plot along a bit.) / I give speeches, hundreds, / all prayers, all soliloquies" (13-16). A curtain seems to have pulled down and up between the acts of "the play." The blank between stanzas conveys, analogously, the passage of time and, above all, the shift of thoughts and actions. Therefore, the instant "stop" pauses like a drawing of breath that is antecedent to an unfolding of an important message. The following "prayers" and "soliloquies" are in no way anticipated to be shallow and insipid. The fact, nevertheless, is that the "speeches" amount to "hundreds." "(This moves the plot along a bit)" turns out to be an ironic comment on what happens here. The overlong speaking is no less unchanging and dull than the repetition of running. In this view, the speech of the "speeches" is suspicious of a contradiction in itself. The narrating and the narrated are likewise distanced and inconsistent.

The implication, however, accords with the subsequent narrative presentation and self-criticism. To begin with, the whole scene records physical activities that should have already finished. They have come to an end so that the speaker is able to record with overall comprehension—"*All* I am doing onstage is running" (emphasis added)—and afterward awareness—"*Suddenly* I stop running" (emphasis added). But the narrative is cast in the present tense. This creates an illusory correspondence between the "narrated time and time of narration" (Cohn 217). In short, the physical movement onstage becomes fused with the successive moment of describing offstage. The temporal sequence is even more compounded by the apparent fact that the "I" performs in front of an audience that is "out of sight." Its running is presented for an invisible "you," and its speech is based on communication. Considered in this way, the actions should have been taking place right now. Since it would be improbable for the speech to be realistically given both before and after the description, the narrative leaves unexplained why the speaker synchronizes verbalization with action.

One way to resolve the paradoxical narration is to split the "I" into the experiencing self and the narrating self as the "I" in "The Actress."[8] The narration is plausible if it is designed to hint at the speaker's immediate reflection upon what she has been doing. The self looks at its own playing, and it describes its actions while performing them. "The Play" thus shares with "The Actress" the implication that the actor/actress is not completely identified and involved with the play/script, the acting, and the role. The actor's difference from the actress is that her dissatisfaction is not rendered audible through another speaker. Indirectly, though, she vocally shows her own discontent. Indeed, the narrative in "The Play" appears confessional because of the self-exposed mind. The narration, however, still reveals an acting self that remains in conflict with its own actions. In other words, the self-consciousness of performing betrays a sense of estrangement that underlines the split of the "I." The speaking voice in the two poems presents not only the characterized women but also a characterizing woman. The actor/actress criticizes the self and the role it plays.

In the first stanza of "The Play," the "I" stays in keen awareness of its doing nothing other than running on the stage. The acting woman has always the viewing woman as her company to see through the self's anxiety. In the second, the self-awareness of the unavoidable impulse is carried on to the "hundreds" of speeches. The "I" admits, at its moment of talking, what she has been saying is "absurd" (17):

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[8] Another way will be discussed in Section IV of this chapter.

> I say absurd things like:
> eggs must not quarrel with stones
> or, keep your broken arms inside your sleeve
> or, I am standing upright
> but my shadow is crooked. (17-21)

The self-criticism reveals more clearly the split of the self into conflicting women. One relentlessly hangs on to the speaking of the "absurd things." The other considers it ridiculous to let go the speaking. The verbose speaking itself is even more "absurd" than the spoken "things." Sounding like a warning, each of the given examples is reasonable to some degree. The weak must keep quiet in the face of the strong. The hurt must not be exposed. It is necessary to detect the self's truth from a wide angle because the self's appearance on the top does not coincide with that at the bottom. The problem is that the examples are too familiar to be expected. The criticism is, hence, posed at the self's copying handy cliches. Read together, moreover, the examples are found inconsistent to one another. The first two sanction concealment but the third, exposure; the suggestion of meekness and hiding is soon challenged by the confession of deceptive fortitude. The speeches are discrepant. Accordingly, another criticism is that the acting self jumbles the "things" up. Or rather, it is unable to decide what to do.

This confusion is interesting since self-criticism is basically designed for rectification. It follows that the viewing, criticizing self stands quite apart from the acting, baffled self. In other words, not only the role but also the self that plays it is considered to be foolish. The criticism, reinforced by those examples, manifests the actor's estrangement. She is alienated from her appearance in public. As such, the actor is not in consonance with herself. The speaking voice that proclaims, "I say absurd things," retains the overtone of discordance. All the "things," which the actor is driven to utter and discredit immediately, turn out to mirror her contradictory character. She tells more than she knows. Just as the cautious submission and restraint are disclosed to be reluctant disguise, so the actor's citing examples betrays her eagerness to unburden the self. In brief, the voice transcribes an inner drama of conflicts and suppressions.

In "The Actress," the drama is likewise built into the actress' self-contradictory thoughts. But the speaking "I" in "The Play" is changed into the spoken "*you*" here.[9] The self that is under its own observation is also another speaker's focus. This is precisely what happens in the narrative where the speaking voice passes through the narrator's reading of the actress' mind. In the lines touching on the director's instruction to the acting, the actress is expressed to repeat silently what the director "emphasizes":

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[9] The "*you*" is italicized in order to signify the feminine second-person pronoun in Chinese and to distinguish it from the neuter pronoun "you."

> He will repeat:
> "May I have *your* name?"
> At that time, the gunnel of *your* soul
> Will be boarded with the white birds of carnal desire and
>   happiness
> To create the perfect illusion. (34-38)

The feminine second-person possessive adjective is crucial to the expression. The grammatical stress on the female gender appears only twice in the poem. Besides the one here, the other comes to pass in lines 51-52: "*You* are required to wear the costume / to wander through the stifling spotlights." Obviously, the stress highlights the cinematic representation of femininity. "*Your*" is deliberately employed to suggest the ironic underside of such femininity. The presented woman belongs to the audience. It is not "I" but "*you*" and yours. By inference, "*your*" arises when the actress' consciousness of the "stifling" acting is observed. Placed under the director's instruction, "*your*" connotes, therefore, three superimposed accounts: the director's naming of the actress, the actress' recalling of it, and the narrator's description of the recitation. Accordingly, the speaking voice consists of expressions that echo one another: a spoken, woman-oriented discourse, a silent monologue, and a written speech. The previous tone is tuned by the one coming next. Hence, the director's words are mimicked. In this manner, the female perspectives reverse his emphasis. Also, the actress' repetition of the words is disclosed; its significance is read against the masculine view of woman. What is laid bare, finally, is the thought departing from "*your*."

The director's instruction is aimed to create an ideal woman "on-screen" (Heath 91). The male protagonist proposes wooing. The heroine in turn is so delighted at the approach that her "soul" is electrified with "carnal desire." Apparently, "the romance plot" is made to transmit "the seductive comforts" (Watts 90) between the characters to the film viewers. The actress is taught to show how the heroine's spiritual and physical beings reach "happiness" because of the protagonist's interest in her. Or conversely, the protagonist's charm has to be shown through the heroine's surrender of her full being. "*Your*" "perfect" image ought to manifest masculine potency. As a result, not only "perfect illusion" is ironically imparted, but illusory perfection too. Retaining the instruction in the actress' mind, the narrative makes the actress an interpreter of the director's perception. What is considered "perfect" is suggested to be exact fabrication; and "illusion," to be false complacency.

Therefore, "*your*" portrait is constructed under the delusion of patriarchal hierarchy. The representation of female surrender derives from the pre-established reality, in which woman is assigned a passive place. In this regard, "*your*" image has functioned on two levels: as "the focus of beauty" (30) for the protagonist within the screen romance, and as the sexual object for some male viewers in the cinema. The looks on either side of the camera are implicated and, above all, criticized. The view that *she* is to "recognize the image *he* creates as her true, and mostly truly desirable self" (Shetley 182; emphasis added) underlines the constructed courtship. And this, to be sure, is what accentuates the actress' sensitivity to "*your*" "interpellation" (Althusser 175).[10] The actress' "double-consciousness" (Goldman 115) of femininity bespeaks her reluctance to display patriarchal "hailing" (Althusser 175) of "*your*" identity. In other words, her looking at the heroine through the director's eye and, consequently, at herself in "costume" under the "stifling spotlights" suggest her alienation from the femininity that is under representation, or indeed, underrepresented.[11]

Thus, "*your*" image oscillates between identity and difference. The actress is what she is not. Or, she is not what she wants to be. The conflicts between the playing and the played self carry on to the narrative that correspondingly vacillates between "you" and "I." Following the "spotlights," there appears the tentative depiction of a woman's missing someone:

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[10] Althusser's "interpellation," or, "hailing," is the operation by which ideology functions to transform the individuals into subjects.

[11] The word here is deliberately chosen to echo Xi Mi's "underrepresentaion" that is quoted earlier in this chapter.

(I miss you so much,
I miss you so much,
I unashamedly desire
The ancient privilege and passionate memory.) (53-56)

The parenthesis seems to imply an interior monologue. In this subjective self-address, "I" is introduced as a woman trapped in unfulfilled longings. However, it is unclear whether the monologue belongs to the heroine or the actress. In continuity with the heroine's "carnal desire and happiness," missing exposes her being ever deeply involved with the protagonist. The unexpected encounter between the characters has developed into the stage of her expecting to experience the days of being together again. Interrelated with missing is her thinking of what would have been and/or what had been already. A pang of irrecoverable loss permeates the monologue. Her suppression, moreover, intensifies the pang. The fact that she unburdens herself of the thought of "privilege" and "memory" when he is absent implies that she is unable and even feels ashamed to express to him her desire. Because of her feeling shame, her naked desire can only be confessed "unashamedly" in silence.

The monologue, when considered to be that of the actress, is both a reaction to, and a reflection of, the suppression. In view of her reluctance to display "*your*" submission, the monologue is triggered by a disinclination to identify the self with the helpless role. She "unashamedly desire[s]" what the heroine has to repress in her mind. However, her desire is also nourished by her thinking of the man in absence. She needs the man beyond reach just as the heroine needs the protagonist. In a sense, she is not much different from the one she refuses to become. Similar to the actor's "I say absurd things," the actress' "I miss you so much" betrays an inner conflict. Unconsciously, the actress falls into the role she is playing and yet denouncing.

The monologue is, hence, ambiguous and contradictory. With these uncertainty and contradiction, what is most truly articulated is the entanglement between "I" and "you." More precisely, the speaking voice has disclosed a troubled mind in love and, in particular, the self's difficulty in leaving the other behind. The actress is inseparable as much from the role she plays as from the past she keeps on recalling. For one thing, the "I" in parenthesis is also the "*you*" that is asked by the protagonist for name, demanded by the director for rehearsing the scene, and required to wear the costume for performance. The passive mobility bears on the self that is acted upon and rendered ineffectual. For another, just as the actress and the heroine are merged in the "*you*," so the "I" is charged with the life story of being an actress in acting and the filmic story of being in love. The alternation of "I" and "you" interacts with the self's border-crossing as it rebounds from imposed representations. In other words, the entanglement grammatically reflects the actress' obsessed mind.

The voice that shuttles between the first and second person pronouns transmutes, indeed, the self's dispersal into nonidentity. The voice, to quote from Smaro Kamboureli, "dispossesses it [the self] of its constitutive identity by continuously recontextualizing it" (163). This causes the splits and divisions within the actress' consciousness. She always sets out to associate the ongoing scene with her life experience and view the role through the other's eye while playing it. Not perpetuating any configuration, the voice articulates something more than the actress' predicament of losing integrity. Besides speaking for her, the voice restores to her the view she is compelled to suppress. The voice records, not as the fixed shot of a camera would, but, rather, as if it were a projector of a flowing montage, able to emit the significance that might be otherwise lost. The speaking voice is therefore in "a process of restitution and reconstitution" (Knoepflmacher 152), of re-presenting the sliding consciousness.

The following lines serve to sum up the narration. Between "*your* soul" and "*you[r]*" "costume" is "your mind" conceived transparently by the narrator:

> Deep in your mind
> You repeatedly repel the conflict between passion and reality.
> The pain and uncanniness are inexplicable in the play.
> You will stealthily sneak out of the frame and people
> To converse with your soul (41-45)

As with the actress' inner thoughts in fluctuation, the voice changes the gender determiner to articulate her wish for detachment. Exempted from the feminine possessive adjective, for example, the mind without specific gender modification expresses a longing for release from the constructed femininity. Thus, "your soul" is not "*your* soul" to be tinged with patriarchal sexuality. Instead, it is the self's counselor. The kind of self that is decided and decidable not by others but by itself is what the actress would like to be and to speak about. Should anyone around be willing to listen, the actress would not "converse with" her soul. The desire to "sneak out of focus and people," moreover, posits silence as the only realm for communion. Silence is where the intonation "deep in your mind" delves. "To record silence," Margaret R. Higonnet states, "necessitates a narrator's voice" (207). Because the actress can only talk to herself as with someone else, her speech is essentially monologic and mute. Hence, the narrator has to immerse herself in the actress' preoccupations to speak silence for her.

The narrator makes audible the conflicts within the actress. Take for examples the second person pronouns again. The "you" is sandwiched between two "*you*'s." The first "*you*" underscores female submission to masculine desire. From this the actress recoils. The second launches the actress' aversion to acting the first out; it proceeds just before the female unashamed desire. As explicated already, the outspoken desire is drawn back by its way of expression. The interior monologue preempts the tongue for pronouncing. Moreover, the "passionate memory" is produced with the existence of a male other, toward whom the desire is now projected. Viewed together, the two "*you*'s" display the actress' failing to avoid the role she defies. The "you" in between captures, hence, the process of her vain struggle against subjection. In this regard, "the conflict between passion and reality" connotes more than the odds against the realization of passion; it indicates the opposition to realizing passion through a manner other than the one the actress herself is made to represent. The actress' repulsion against the conflict is gradually revealed in the shifting contexts. In speaking out her silence, the narrator interprets it against the borders she traverses back and forth, thereby reconstituting its significance.

Stated further, the narrator's, and the narrative's, double movement between contexts, is marked by the voice that reveals in fine nuance the actress' emotional exile. Indeed, the voice allows the narrator to translate the exile through empathy. How else could the narrator receive the inner thought of displacement as if it were constituent of her own world? In fact, the narrator's empathy is the counterpart of the actress' exile. Both "exile and empathy," according to Papastergiadis, are "continuous forms of departure/arrival and projection/interjection":

> Empathy extends the identity of the self as it approaches the other . . . as a subject with consciousness. This process of

> apprehension involves a sense of journeying: a departure from the preconceived certitudes . . . . In this sense empathy with the other approximates a sort of exile from the self . . . . (4)

In parallel to the actress' desire to flee from a fixed circumstance, therefore, is the narrator's transference from a certain context. Based on empathy, this "journeying" is furthermore featured by alteration and variation of narrative. In this way, the actress' silence and monologue are reverberated between contexts. Likewise, her obsession with associated memory and deviation from the present acting are intensified through semantic accumulation. Hence, the actress' wish to "sneak out of focus and people" is recaptured at the point where she is faced with the camera eye. "The pain and uncanniness are inexplicable in the script" changes to "Look at the camera and then cry / . . . / Your tears are not in the script" (76-79) and, then, to "Look at the camera.

Soundless whimper is not in the script" (91). These lines on "camera" build up an inescapable sense of "not-belonging" (Said 51).

Put another way, the actress' feeling not at home is enhanced through an increasing disapproval of the script. To begin with, "uncanniness" occurs not as something new but as something familiar suddenly changes to be foreign. It causes "pain" mostly when the self becomes a foreigner it has to live with in reality. In view of the "camera," the "pain and uncanniness" confront just the self that faces up to its alien double. Indeed, the narrator uses "camera" to present the actress' suffering. Conspicuously, "uncanniness" is placed after "conflict." The "conflict," as already discussed, is focused on the way passion is realized. Since the realized passion shows woman's existence as projection of patriarchal hierarchy, the actress' "pain and uncanniness" are implied to result from this representation of female self. This explains the tacit suggestion in the word "inexplicable": the feelings are explicated in the script, but they are not genuinely captured. In other words, the heroine's "pain and uncanniness" are not as real and intense as the actress' own. The actress is inflicted through missing not only a "male other" but also an identical self. Implicit in her wish to escape, therefore, is the twofold consciousness: that of the self inscribed in the script and that of the self concealed behind the denial of the text. The latter is at once evoked and called off by the former. Namely, the awareness that she can only act, according to the other's wish, accelerates her approaching and retreating from the self she wants to be.

The tension results in her sense of "not-belonging." "With all these entries and exits," to follow Papastergiadis, "what is mostly undermined is the stability of place, the coherence of a space that one can occupy, work on, represent, construct" (6). To play the self at the service of patriarchal hegemony eventuates the actress' separation from the reality where she is situated and identified. Her desire to "sneak out of focus and people," finally, is to escape the discourse that confines her to the "preestablished" (Lionnet 60) role and, furthermore, to evade the patriarchal order that such discourse prescribes. It is, in a way, to reconstruct the self in the realm of silence.

IV

Silence could be where the borderline between life and death dwells. In this respect, to be is to live in relationships, to communicate and to break through silence. Not to be, on the contrary, is to succumb to absolute quietness, thereby terminating all life. Between the two, the only way to remain silent and yet articulate is to have death speak, which is then made possible by the shock of killing the self. Indeed, suicide is committed with a secret wish for expression. The attempt at self-murder grows when the self feels itself situated in a predicament in which it has "nothing to say it with" (Thiher 154) except with its stillborn body. Whether actualized or not, the attempt *embodies* the self's resistance against imposed limits. This is especially the case with woman's suicide. As Caroline Hall observes, "much has been written about female . . . suicide in literature as the only way for a female character situated in such a submissive and deferential position to achieve power and self-expression" (84).[12] The same recurs in "The Actress" and "The Play." Both Feng Qing and Sexton conclude the female "struggle for subjectivity" with suicide. Though in different manners, the actor and the actress make a plot of death to announce their reaction to patriarchal dominance.

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[12] Take, for example, Henrik Ibsen's heroine in *Hedda Gabler*.

What is at stake in such reaction, literally, is the self's existence. When the poets draw upon death to answer the played self's silence, the actress and the actor alike are plunged into the ultimate risk of life. To be dead or alive in the end is determined by the self's way of playing death. As discussed already, both the actress and the actor are confronted with an identity problem. Tied to acting but rhythmically resisting the roles, they denounce the oppressive representation of the women they act out. They are permanently alienated from the self, alienated in the patriarchal discourse of femininity. Worse than mandatory, acting is estranging. The actor manages to endure acting, but the actress finally rejects it. Whereas the actor plays death on the circumscribed stage, the actress does it by crossing the borderline between fiction and reality. Hence, the actress plays death in her own way and in reality. Like the heroine she is cast into, she chooses to commit suicide to reject her subject identity. By contrast, the actor performs death as a fiction, thereby continuing her struggle.

The actor survives, but the actress not. In fact, this is carefully prepared by the speaking voice the poets apply to tell the tale. In "The Play," the actor is secure in the first-person pronoun. "I" speaks till the end of the poem to prove the self's returning from death. In "The Actress," "I" relies on "you" to define its living depth. The actress' being in the world is heard through "you," which, for the most part, bears within it a double-voiced discourse: the actress' interior monologue and the narrator's account of it. The discourse, moreover, contains a twofold significance. First, "I" and "you" are capable of being merged through empathy. Second, they are also separable because of their reference to two different beings. The second concludes the first and allows for the final, sympathetic recording of the actress' death. Unlike Sexton, Feng Qing employs the second-person pronoun to prepare for the narrator's witness of death from a distance.

Besides, the replacement of "you" with "she" near the end of the poem coincides exactly with the vanishing of "I" from the narrative. The speaking voice in "The Actress" ends in "the third-person realm of the nonperson" (Thiher 138) to announce the self's dissolution into complete silence. The actress transforms herself into "it," a mute object, by duplicating the suicide in the fiction of the film. After resisting with her life the patriarchal view of woman, she still falls prey to it. Her death embodies instead the reified role of woman, which the actor tries to survive. The following passages will back up the different endings to reach the interrelation between the shifting speaking voice and the self's struggle in the trial of exile and identity. Of importance here will be the actress' resistance through death in comparison with the actor's.

The actress' death wish is implied by the narrative that moves quickly from her mind to the script:

> At that time, you will empty out all your life.
> To finish shooting the rainy season of the harbor . . . .
> . . . .

Before the actress kills herself
The man has to drink up the bottle. (57-61).

These lines follow those probing into the actress' despair at life and anticipate those into her desperate resistance. Viewed together, they unfold the actress' gradual steps from self-understanding to the "emplotment" (Kerby 12) of her experience.

Her self-understanding is engendered by the likeness between her lived past and her acting present: "Thus the stories ten years ago and ten years since then / Again in the same attire / Flee into absolute nihilism" (47-49). Following the phrase, "to converse with your soul," these lines disclose her inner-directed look at the self. The self now is no better than and, indeed, no less different from it was then. It has been clothed, disguised, and concealed from itself. Its fate is that of being repeatedly expropriated by imposing misidentification. Apparently, such discovery takes on a cumulative view of time. For the actress, time is not only a "diachronic experience of moving chronologically backward" to the story "ten years ago," but also a "synchronic experience of turning inward" (Miller 291) to the traumatic impact of the story. Hence, the story "ten years since then" is found to repeat the "nihilism" that inflicted the self before. The two stories are linked together not so much by the likeness between them as by the actress' associative memory. The actress' experience at present triggers her mental connection.

The experience, as already mentioned, is that of being caught up in authorial mastery over the self's identity. This occurs in the actress' present moment of acting. The moment is therefore a confinement from which the actress tries to escape. Interestingly, the renounced moment is reflected in the narrating voice. "According to Benveniste," Thiher notices, "all our notions of temporality find their roots in the self-referential present moment of the 'I'" (135). The implication, he goes further, is that "the present moment . . . can only be defined in terms of the moment in language where the 'I' is articulated" (135). Feng Qing often employs "you" to depict the actress' "struggle for subjectivity." The actress never speaks; still less does she voice herself out through "I," except when "I" refers at the same time to the narrator or the heroine.[13] In the narrative, "I" is almost absent; it depends on, and is immersed in, "you," as if for shelter. Without the anchoring position given by "I," the actress' present, time, and, in a broader extent, life, all appear elusive and, in fact, grow dimmer in the end. Thus, the narration further illuminates the actress' coping with time in the present by escaping eventually to death.

In other words, the narrator's position behind "you" permits her to examine the tension between life and death. In the lines following the attempt to "empty out all the life," the actress' distance from death is shortened. Still channeled in the second-person pronoun, her thinking is expressed as clearly as if by herself: "You will again force yourself to be naked / To record a complete fraud in creation" (65-66). The future tense here imparts a determination of resistance. In an assertive tone, the actress' way of resolving the played self is told. Since she has no choice but to play, she will involve herself more deeply in acting so as to counteract it from within. Her body, the very site of being acted upon, becomes the site where she upholds her resistance. The naked body is no longer inarticulate. It turns out to be a figure for transcribing, ironically, the ideology that strips away woman's subjectivity. This is attested by the actress' striving to "record the complete fraud in creation." Worked out through subversive intention, the acting is all the more plotted than it is by the director. The creation here is not his "artistic creation" pronounced at the beginning of "The Actress." Instead, it is the actress'. Her creation, as opposed to his, is "complete" rather than partial and, in a sense, not biased in favor of patriarchal hierarchy.

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[13] Take, for example, "I think the more proper explanation is pain."

Indeed, it is even too "complete" to be "artistic." The actress' ultimate lapse into death finds its clue in the creation that is achieved through realistic undertaking. Later, her committing suicide like the heroine in the end of the poem is so veritably real that it deceives the camera eye. Her "fraud" is deliberately a misrepresentation of what the director means to produce. His emphasis, most typified by the assertion that "It should be like a representation of a mimetic experience," is ironically put into practice. In this regard, the patriarchal discourse that underlines his stress is mocked and subverted.

The resistance through death in "The Actress" can never be redeemed. It can, however, in "The Play." A brief look at the last lines of "The Play" helps explain why the actress fails to survive. After giving a negative self-comment on her acting, the actor immediately goes on to justify her "bad performance" (29):

> That's because I'm the only actor
> and there are few humans whose lives
> will make an interesting play.
> Don't you agree?   (30-33)

Here, "humans" as well as "you" are included to endorse her justification. By "humans," the difficulty in acting out "an interesting play" is meant to confront not only woman but also man. The inclusion of man is especially noteworthy when read together with woman's isolation claimed in the first lines: "I am the only actor. / It is difficult for one woman / to act out a whole play." The actor's predicament is that of being situated on the stage to perform without any other supporting actors. Thus, to include man in the end is to undo woman's exclusion in the beginning. In other words, the actor struggles through exclusion, or, in spite of it. This is where the actress stops short. As her "creation" suggests, the actress' ultimate way of counteracting is to get involved completely in the acting itself. Unlike the actor, who accepts her performance as "bad," the actress demands hers to be "complete." By submerging herself directly to what preempts her subjectivity, she confronts the exclusive mastery. Hence is the possibility, or even the reality, of being overwhelmed.

The actress' full indulgence in resistance can be further explored by a reading of "you" in "The Play." Apparently, "you" is invited to confirm the actor's justification. It appears only once, at the end of the poem, after the play finishes. For the actor, it is the audience offstage; for the poet, the reader. No matter which is the case, the shift from "I" to "you" bespeaks a turning from the speaker. More precisely, the shift signals an attempt to detach the played self from its predicament, or, even to ask for help. Such a turning never appears in "The Actress." The actress chooses to escape into her very being, thereby being isolated within her own predicament. The "you" that always presupposes "I" in the narrative presentation is evidence of her ultimate isolation. Whereas the speaking voice in "The Play" manifests a presence (i.e. the existence of an audience or a reader) that stays away from "the play" itself, the voice in "The Actress" configures a "you" that is obliged to remain in the script. The latter is so in order for the narrator to follow the actress' association of the script with her past. The actress cannot, and will not, free the self from acting. The actor, on the contrary, disrupts her engagement in acting by appealing to someone over there. Therefore, "you" in "The Play" obviates the self's realistic entering into death.

In other words, "you" is related to the imagined death in the self's mind. Inasmuch as it is imagined in solitude, death passes almost unnoticed except by the one who addresses "you." Indeed, death never appears in the narrative. It is submerged and only implied when the narrative continues to the end of the actor's "play": "The curtains falls. / The audience rushes out" (27-28). These lines become surprising if juxtaposed with the other two at the beginning: "The play is my life, / my solo act" (4-5). Isn't the end of the play also that of the actor's life? As her act finishes, so does her being. Who, then, asks for the agreement of "you" after her death? Isn't the speaking voice still in the presence of "I," "the only actor," who tries at the end of the poem to justify herself? After all, is the actor dead or not? Yes, but only in the poet's imagination. In fact, the actor dies for the poet.

As already mentioned, "you" could be the audience or the reader. Accordingly, the narrative of "The Play" could be a spoken discourse or a written one. Conjoining the first-person colloquy with a presence that does not show up until the last moment, the poem implicates the poet on the scene of the actor's acting and the actor, of the poet's writing. Sexton's words on herself are worthy of quoting again: "I am an actress in my own autobiographical play."[14] Thus, the poet is the actress who is involved with acting. In the case of "The Play," this claim implies that the actor's confrontation with estrangement, exclusion, as well as the consequent resistance, are the poet's own experiences. It follows that the actor's death with "the play" is identical to the poet's with "The

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[14] See note 3.

Play." Kay Capo observes: "Sexton chooses Death as the answer to her identity problem" (39). Here, the poet dares death in her own writing space. In such a light, "The Play" could be read this way: Sexton attempts suicide to cease her acting by imaging herself to be the actor who *is* dead.[15]

More specifically, the actor *has* died, only for the poet to remain alive in reality. The line following immediately the end of the "The Play" betrays a return from death that has already occurred: "It *was* a bad performance" (29; my emphasis). The grammatical past tense suggests that the actor's entire acting and ending are recalled. As such, death is at the beginning of the narrative. Since the other lines proceed in the present tense, death is furthermore evoked. "The Play," so to speak, begins implicitly with the "evocative present" (Cohn 201). The lines that come before the clause, "it was a bad performance," are based on the poet's recalling what she is recounting as lively as if it were before her very eyes. This argument is readily verified by the synchronization of the actor's acting and narrating, which has been discussed in section III.[16] The lines that follow the past-tense line, on the contrary, start from the poet's return to her narrative present. In sum, a single past-tense line divides the whole poem into two different presents: death before and life after. Thus, the narrative correspondingly shifts from duration to instant. The lines, passing through "never," "all," and "hundreds" in the sense of an endless dragging, shape the actor's state that is as stagnant as death. By contrast, the last line—"Don't you agree?"—leaves behind listlessness to spell the poet's invocation at a punctual moment.

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[15] In fact, Sexton died of suicide in 1974.

[16] See note 8.

The narrative structure of "The Play" intimates the poet's imaginary entering into death. Her posthumous speaking as a dead actor suggests a way to counter acting, not unlike the suicide in "The Actress," but diametrically opposed to it. Whereas Sexton identifies herself with the actor who has died in her imagination to save the played self, Feng Qing, though empathizing with the actress, keeps a distance from her, finally, when the actress commits suicide to terminate the played self. Not surprising, then, the played self in "The Play" is constituted by the actor who speaks through the first-person singular "I." In "The Actress," it is constituted by the speaker, who speaks for the actress, the poet, and the narrator who mediates between the two. Relatively speaking, the self's identity in "The Play" is as static as the voice that tours from death to life, from a journey that has been chosen and preconditioned at the beginning of the narrative. In "The Actress," the identity shifts just as the voice winds, in different pronouns, from life to death. Just as the journey is desperately endured and variously translated, so the identity is in constant disequilibrium.

Thus, the identity shifts again when the speaking voice comes closer to the end of the journey. In the last two stanzas, the voice no longer relies on "you" to announce the actress' struggle. Instead, it adopts "the actress," a kind of naming that functions as "she" does, to suggest the narrator's departure from empathetic engagement: "The actress still in classical, long skirt / Solely walks toward the harbor in twilight" (105-106). "Because detachment from life," to borrow from Hall, "is the suicide's primary attitude, the tone remains detached and impersonal" (100). To present the actress' determination to drown and violate her own body, the narrator now talks like an emotionally uninvolved observer. She remains removed until, several lines later, "we" endows her with "the authoritative empirical truth" (Yorke 28): "Between realistic desperation and embellishment of the script, / We cannot find the straight, exquisite road" (111-112). By "we," the narrator not only explains the actress' helpless bending toward self-abnegation, but also betrays the poet's sympathy with those women who share the deadly fate.

Since "we" suggests an alliance between "you" and "I," the actress' suicide is illustrative of the other women's final "struggle for subjectivity." The actress' clothing further supports the argument. As commonly known, "clothing is the gendered construct of a particular cultural and historical location" (Gaard 241). Wrapped up within the actress' costume, "the classical, long skirt," are therefore the abiding patriarchy and, inherently, the female self that is as submissive as the heroine. Dressing like a character, the actress "still" succumbs to the cinematic representation of femininity that provokes her suicide. In spite of her reluctance, the actress unconsciously follows rather than rejects the "sentimental plot." She shows just exactly how the female self is prompted to take acting as a shaping force of its life in reality. By the actress' way of dressing for death, the poet thus unveils the hideous effect of the self's involvement with representation; the "skirt" image bespeaks both the hunting power of acting and the way in which a female self inevitably ends with the role it plays.

The actress is acted upon, again, and yet, by her own manner of resistance. Suicide, in a sense, is committed to articulate the futile struggle that yields the self even more to patriarchy. Though the actress finally avoids the masculine eye, she sets foot further in submission as the conclusion implies:

> This long shot needs no editing.
> Inaudible are
> The actress' real soliloquy and glistening tears
> Before she wades into the water.   (119-122)

These lines vacillate between fiction and reality just as the actress' act does. On the one hand, the "long shot" that needs no cutting suggests a realistic showing. Its reality becomes increasingly apparent when the narrative reaches the point of "water," the physical spot for submerging the self. Here, the actress is walking "out of focus" and away from the camera eye. She manages to evade the director's instruction that runs after her image at the beginning of the poem. But this in turn creates the impression that she is hunted to death. Her escape is paid at the price of stifling reality and life altogether. On the other hand, therefore, the actress' wading is still captured in terms of the "long shot" that bears on shooting. The fictional portrait of female suicide is still implicitly drawn upon to manifest death in reality. Again, the script is at work here; it acts upon the actress without her realizing it. "The desire to kill oneself is a betrayal of . . . the whole self" (Goodman 74). In carrying out her death wish, the actress gives herself up to what spurs the wish, namely, to patriarchal restraint on female subjectivity.

Her struggle ends in failure. It is ineffective and, so, "inaudible." Besides a hint at her wading away from the corporeal world, the "inaudible" "soliloquy" and "tears" foreshadow the futile outcome of her death. "Voice," O'Donnell states, "makes . . . audible the implication of the subject within the dominant ideology as well as . . . the alarm of its [the subject's] resistance to . . . authorial mastery" (24). Being "inaudible," the "implication" and "resistance" of the subject result in nothing more than an inner drama that impinges only on itself. In this view, the actress remains a mute subject that is subjected to patriarchy. Another point that follows O'Donnell, however, is that the speaking voice in "The Actress" has articulated and rendered audible the actress' doomed struggle. In other words, the poem is a bodying forth of the poet's "implication" and "resistance" for such a female subject.

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Indeed, "The Actress" can be taken not only as descriptive of the actress but, more importantly, as exemplary of a female subject like the actress. In fact, the actress' acting is a story of power relations, of power exercised between the dominant and the exiled. By analogy, the actress-like subject is best defined as a self played upon by patriarchal direction of woman, on the one hand, and her struggle against it, on the other. In this regard, the dynamic interplay between representation, identity, and subjectivity of a female subject marks "The Actress" as a poem that is essentially political. Herein lies Feng Qing's difference from the other three poets—Luo Fu, Luo Men, and Chen. Implicitly, Chen still tries to confer a national identity upon his constructed self just as Luo Fu and Luo Men unquestionably do. In contrast to them, Feng Qing remains concentrated on the self's own identity problem that revolves around the other's view of it. Her reference to the prenarrative appears therefore general and so unbound to the national status of Taiwan. Thus, "The Actress" provides an alternative investigation into self-identity, which coincides with the trend of poetry that chooses to suspend the controversial issue of the national subjectivity.[17]

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[17] This does not mean that Feng Qing avoids dealing with the issue in other poems. In fact, one of her concerns in *Happy or Unhappy Fishes* is "China's democracy and freedom." See Lin Yaode's "Eternal Wall Rubbing of Fish" 10.

Conclusion

This dissertation treats varieties of the constructed self: "the historical self," "the exiled self," "the lonely self," and "the played self." The various ways in which Luo Fu, Luo Men, Chen Kehua, and Feng Qing express the speaking voice exemplify the constitution of self in the poetic narratives.

In the first chapter, the speaking "I" is close to the implied poet. The "I" is created to go through a narrative of history that has afflicted the poet. The self emerges, in fact, from the gradual agreement of the speaking "I" with the implied poet's view of history. This convergence takes place, moreover, in a quest for the truth of a national history that influences the speaker's personal identity and subjectivity. During this quest, the "I" has been "caught up" (Kerby 7) in the prenarrative of Chinese republican era. The history of the republic, especially its establishment and separation, is embodied in its founder, Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The quest, so to speak, is carried on by the immersion of the "I" in the contesting political representations of the founder by both Taiwan and Mainland China. As the "I" probes into "the non-political totem," it confronts also these perspectives inherent in these representations.

As shown already, the totem is "analogous to archaeological finds" that demand the "I" to dig into "their precise location and sense" (Kerby 23). The speaker's coming to acknowledge the "narrative truth" (Kerby

87) of the history that the implied poet has uncovered underlines, hence, the constitution of the self. In other words, the self in Luo Fu is constructed out of the manifold perspectives, against which the speaker's view of history merges finally with the implied poet's.

In the second chapter, the prenarrative into which the speaking voice delves is the tragedy of Chinese uprooting. In fact, this history of departure and arrival precedes that of homecoming revealed in "Totem." The drastic tragedy in "Sonata" is not the direct confrontation with a changed homeland but the hopeless waiting for a homeward journey. This is remarkably introduced at the beginning of the poem.

The poem opens with a speaking viewer standing in Hong Kong to gaze at Mainland China where he longs to return. When a train comes to cross the border, he is brought back to stand at the window in Taipei. A "he," an old veteran, appears then in the city. Thus, in a gaze, the "I" gazes into and disappears within the nostalgic consciousness of the "he." "He" is seen to drift back and forth along the temporal dimensions of the past and the present, of memory and reality. The "I" emerges to replace "he" only after the speaking voice enters finally into a series of apostrophes to the mother country. As an apostrophe is invoked at the instant of writing, the implied poet is manifest in this "I." It turns out that the poet, an exile himself, cannot break away from the displacement that gives rise to "Sonata." His allusion to tranquil dwellings that are depicted in classical Chinese poetry of nature bespeaks, hence, a resort to poetic language in order to withstand the tragedy of exile.

Here, Kerby's perception of the past is illuminating. The past is not simply remembered; it is realized through the present perspective that the past has to contend with (24). To recollect the past is at the same time to interpret and to bridge it with the present again. Displacement, then, is a movement through time that very often accords with what is fed into memory rather than memory itself. While reestablishing this self-identity on the island, the exile cannot but grope for his Chinese genealogy and, concomitantly, for the different social realities of Taiwan and the Mainland. The recollection, of his past and the homeland transformed in the poetry, is therefore an interpretation of Taiwan and China in their present. As such, the chapter constructs the exiled self from interrelated exile and memory.

Apparently, separation and nostalgia are the keynotes in "Sonata." In a sense, the notes located in the relationship between the sexes are what underscore Chen's "Portrait." Instead of the political climate of Taiwan, the third chapter confronts directly the declining social world of Taipei. The focus here is the lonely self that longs for an understanding intimate and, yet, still remains alienated in its sexual relationship. The self's bitter retreat into isolation is charted by a progressive demonstration of sexual disorder and spiritual barrenness. Such a landscape is precarious hegemony on display. Paradoxically, the authority of patriarchy over the self is countered by the latter's indulgence in a patriarchal portrait of femininity. Whether it is release or resistance, however, indulgence speeds up the emotional separation between the sexes.

The interplay between the isolated subject and sophisticated femininity is articulated by the speaking voice that disperses to form a discordant trio. At first, the pensive mediation of a perverse male poet on women in Taipei is tuned with sarcastic irony. The threatening urban women in his eye yield to a humble middle-aged woman as the poem moves to its next sequence. Here, the woman is perceived not with fearful anxiety but with condescending superiority. The speaker's "pride and prejudice" are then challenged by a female speaker's defiant utterance of her sexual desire. As the articulate tone vanishes into silence in the succeeding sequence, another male speaker's observance of his mistress is overheard. The mistress's ambiguous servitude, in turn, is suggested by a detached overview of the couple. No longer underlying the "I's" of the male and female speakers, the implied poet now takes a penetrating stance to speak for "he" and "she." This is furthered in the last sequence, where a twin's story is told from the implied poet's perspective.

Thus, the implied poet's view in Chen's "Portrait" functions as the third party. It expresses ironically both the man's and the woman's reckless attitude toward sex. At the same time, however, it sympathizes with their suffering from accustomed views of femininity. Their deteriorating relationship and loneliness, in other words, are simultaneously deplored and criticized by the implied poet. The lonely self, as it were, is built upon the constant modulations of the trio.

The chapter on Feng Qing's "The Actress" complements the male-oriented standpoint by considering female perspectives of womanhood. Similar to that in "Portrait," the self is revealed here not in the visible border between political states but in the invisible gap between men and women. This is grammatically presented in the superimposed layers of narratives. On the surface is the scene of film-making. Intersected with the manifest narrative is an undercurrent of tension. The actress' acting is subordinated to the director's instruction. Shuttling between the narratives of production and performance, moreover, is a female narrator's omnipresent expression. The actress' mind is seen to traverse a doomed romance in the script, a similar experience in her own past, and an imperative demand for performing a subservient woman at present. Fiction and reality, the past and the present, as well as their interrelated viewpoints overlap with one another and turn against the prenarrative of sexism. The viewpoints take turns to show patriarchal dominance on one side and feminine resistance on the other, as if they were guided by the changing focus of a camera.

Likewise, the speaker in the poem changes according to the articulation of conflicting power and resistance. There is the narrator's sympathy with the actress' "struggle for subjectivity" and the authorially endorsed "I" in relation with "she." The actress' recalling the director's words to her are demonstrated by the addressing of the masculine "I" to the feminine "*you.*" Examples of such changing pronouns are taken in the chapter to disclose the played self.

In view of the speaking voice, the constituted self is no less shifting and multiple than the diverse perspectives and pronouns in the poetic narratives. As with the voice that oscillates between different stances, the self is impinged upon, and disunited by, the conflict between the given and the desired. Altogether, the variant, discordant, and contradictory standpoints articulate a dialectic tension between the constructed self and the prenarrative that prompts its creation. Consequently, the construction of the self discloses in the end the poet's attempt to write back to a turbulent reality.

Composed in the period from the late 80s to the early 90s, the poetic narratives present selves that bear striking images of a heterogeneous and polyphonic era. To a certain degree, this resonance reflects the public's disavowal of a monolithic sociopolitical order. The selves that emerge from the various stances are called on to continue the struggle against deceptive sameness. Much like the era that abounds with possibilities of alteration, the narratives hold open different interpretations as well. As Kerby remarks, "identity need[s] never be settled and final, for the prenarrative out of which it arises need never have a definite interpretation" (110). The shifting speaking voice evinces the poet's awareness of the changing potentials in the self and the prenarrative.

Likewise, the present study tries to offer only *one* possible way of reading the selected poems. Since a new sociopolitical context will generate new subject positions, a poet's constitution of the self must be redefined against their emergence and reality. Hence, there is no claim of conclusive "truth" in this study. What is considered true is the need for constituting the self through narration. And that, to be sure, is the need not only of the poet but also of her/his reader, whose developing self-identification is echoed in the constitution these poems conduct.

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Appendix I:
English Translation of the Selected Chinese Poems

(Cited in Chapter One)

Luo Fu

The Non-Political Totem:
Visiting Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Late Residence

Tsui-heng Village of Zhongshan County in Canton Province is a legend in the mind of modern Chinese People. But when you confront it in person, you feel the imposing desolation of history and the bitterness in reality.

In the early August, I visited our National Father's late residence as a pilgrim. During the two hours' stay, my mind seethed with complicated impact. We encountered the storm and thunder at that time; while its downpour shook our spirit, my memory returned to the recent event of the June-Fourth Tiananmen Square. I suddenly felt the entangled images of history and reality, individual and age, a great man and China's fate, throb in my chest. This was the foetus of this "Non-Political Totem": it was finished half month later after I returned to Taiwan. In recent years, Chinese on both sides of Taiwan Strait have the epoch-making opportunity in hand. Although the poet is not a creator of history, he cannot deny himself the consciousness of being a witness to history. In this poem, the perception of history and reality, combined with individual emotion and meditation, characterizes my writing of a short lyric epic.

1.

Running after a hat blown away in the strong wind
I hurried into
An undefended history.

2.

Here, there is more duplicated scenery
Than Cuiheng Village in the elementary textbook.
More larks speaking common languages—
From the zenith of the kind sky
I seem to see a solitary smoke rising upward, to
Form a giant whirlpool.
Nothing suspicious.
I only know some sections in the history
Have never been touched before;
If touched, the printed words in the books will crumble.
But now I stand in the heart spot of it
To read its childhood, youth, adulthood, old age,
Legacy, chronicle, pedigree, and diversities of age.
It is really interesting.
Worship mixed with mood for sightseeing,
I walk while scraping my head.
Except for making the bombs, the republic, and roses,[1]
What can we learn from a revolutionist?
For a long time
A bomb
And
Another bomb
Having been gazing at each other.
A Republic
And
Another Republic
Having been silently facing each other.
In between, except for emitting the love's electric wave,
What else can the rose say?
Straddling both seashores,
Except for trying the temperature of the water,
What else can the feet do?
Actually whether to do or not to do
Tomorrow's sun and the specks of old age
Still crawl on the forehead.
Actually, right now,
We are at the gate of the memorial hall.
The young clerk
Points to the forty-year simplified character "Sun" and says:
This is a harmless,
Non-political totem.
And Renminbi can go everywhere unrestrainedly.
Thus, with fifty cents,
I buy the boundless desolateness of the half afternoon.

3.

(Before entering the hall,
I eat a red pomegranate;
Its core stuffs my throat and silences me for a while.)

The welcome words of the curator
Is warmer than the chairs in the reception room.
The air-conditioner is adjusted to a point not too left nor too right
That reminds me of one poetic line on the Tiananmen Square.
Perturbed and timorous, I sip the hot tea,
Being afraid
That the china cup will suddenly explode in my stomach.
"It's a nice day," says the curator.
But what I think is that bad year.
The flood revolted; the locusts came to a revolution;
The snow left behind itself the universal white. I think about
The hidden dirt in the long fingers of the Empress T'zu-Hsi,
The lice crawling in the long plaits of courtiers and princes,
And the cigar among the whiskers of the general commander of Eight-Country-United-Forces.
Then there was no more smoke in Peking.
Li Hung-chang had a big-sized spittoon.
Mao Tse-tung had a middle-sized spittoon.
Teng Hsiao-ping had a small-sized spittoon.
I suddenly feel the throat itchy.
Looking around, I ask:
Mister, on what part of China would you suggest
I spit out this mouthful of blood clot?
Outside the window,
The birds chirp as that year;
The rivers meander as that year;
The stones remain stupid and stubborn as that year,
The bicycles smell rusty as that year.
The autumn has not really arrived,
Yet, the leaves in scattered words have begun
To fall and drift from different angles.
One leaf brushes on my cheek.
It hurts a little; it is hard to trace the cause.
On the branches sit a quiet fruit,
Like my head in retrospection,
Attentively listens to
The echoes of history's falling.

4.

In the recent few hundred years,

Our people have slept.
We   have   slept.
Because we have slept,
Culture regresses and
Politics degenerates.
We   have
                    Slept
                                        Have
                                                            Slept . . . .

As soon as the tape recorder is turned on, our heads are awakened by his steel-like Cantonese language of officialdom, awakened from one year before the year before the intermittent pain of 1924;[2] from the resounding drum of the South, from the crumbling noise of the opium couches, from the nightmare of the long and black queues, from the bondage of those rubbish, shameful, damned humiliating treaties, from the first gun shot at Wuchang Battalion in the Xinhai year, from the falling gray clothes under the Lu-Kou Bridge, from the frequent breaths of Japanese bombs, from the blood-thirsty thorns, from the hastily rustling footsteps, from the bloody clash between the greedy, selfish right hand and the cruel, torturing left hand, from a big bag of cocaine hidden in the Mao's Little Red Book, from many bubble-like lies, from the students' suicide notes, from the rumbling of the tanks on the square,
From the mumbling thunder at Tsui-heng Village in the afternoon,
I suddenly awake.

5.

Injury inflicted in June
Still hurt in July.
Not until August did they know some flowers were not to be picked.
I scratch my head again.
I hold a palm of dandruff—
The fossil of a handful of troublesome thoughts
Thus follow the host
To enter his late residence.
It looks like a legend,
Yet it has the most defensible reality,
The most obstinate essence.
On the right side of the yard,
There is a plum tree once he planted.[3]
The tree is sour and, yet, its flowers not.
They are said to be relished as brewed tea.
But they bloom and then fade instantly,
Like the rising sun on the Chinese horizon.
After a thunderstorm in some year,
The waist of its trunk broke; it became a hunchback.
Its original vast and thick shade

Shrinks to less than ten feet.
No stone lions guard this place,
Yet one can hear the old well growl to the sky;
Someone is awakened;
Someone else buries his head in the blanket for a deep sleep.

I scratch my scalp and read
To the following page,
Turning to the humble age narrated in fine dusts.
One alarm clock
Complains the noisy age.
Following the direction of the host's finger, I see:
A pan of frozen boiling;
A furnace of cooling burning;
A bowl of wind-dried tears;
A ladle of virtue distilled from one-thousand-year cool spring;
A chair of solemn and dismal meditation;
A bed of hero's dream startled by the sword's howl.
I also follow him to enter the study,
Into the depth of the years ruminated in fire.
In the deep night, he sat as a cool and solemn peak,
Looking up and down, groping
For a sharp operation scalpel.
He rose at the waning night, hands crossed,
Walking in the room, thinking hard of
A project to change heaven without the use of iron and blood.
He expected a storm,
Just as he expected the dawn.
He would make a steel-like spirit
For the trouserless people,
To instill the protein of the morning light
Into the impotent tomorrow.

The room in stark silence.
The room ready for the gale and the thunder.
I try hard to check a sneeze, seeing
Him with a face of passion stand up with a thump
And shake down the accumulated dust
On the shoulders.
He was silent and wordless,
Caressing the scattered remnant on the desk--
A terrestrial globe: the world still twirled in his palm;
A stethoscope: he had long heard China's irregular heartbeats;
A gas lamp: the persistent cool flame at night;
A writing brush: Li Hung-chang, allow me to speak about
The critical things of rise and fall.[4]

6.

His words
Stop and continue.
On the wall, the dust
Gathers and falls.
The face of time
Is soiled and washed.
The mother fire in the core of the earth
Is extinguished and comes alive again.

Three o'clock in the afternoon, I still cannot catches my hat,
But the countenance of Tsui-heng Village has suddenly changed.
Resoundingly comes a summer downpour.
August is no longer quiet,
The heavy rain beating the tiles, beating the windows,
Beating the fallen leaves on the stairs,
Beating the pale moss at the well,
Beating the mournful house before and after the birth.
The rain cleans up the summer's desire, washes away
The disarranged footsteps of those who study history;
It also exposes the deeper wound under the mud.
With a tattered umbrella,
I rush out of the cold and wet history.
Looking up at the sky,
I seem to perceive
A castrated dragon coming in the clouds,
But I lose the direction of the sole walker in the rain.

Notes:

[1] "On the of corridor of the second floor of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's late residence, those machines which were used to produce the ammunition for revolution are displayed." (Luo Fu's note)

[2] "Invited by China Evening News reporters in Shanghai, Dr. Sun gave this speech in 1924. This recording is part of the original one-hour-and-forty-five-minute speech that was made at first to become a phonograph record and collected by a Japanese." (Luo Fu's note)

[3] "This tree was once blasted by a thunderstorm. It reclines on the ground, the twists and branches obliquely grow, and the flowers still bloom as ever. At first sight, it looks like a giant potted plant; it is a spectacle." (Lou Fu's note)

[4] "According to the caretaker, this calligraphic brush is the one that Dr. Sun used to write down his political philosophy for Li Hungzhang [of the Qing Dynasty]." (Lou Fu's note)

(Cited in Chapter Two)

Luo Men

Time and Space Sonata—Viewing Canton-Kowloon Railway from a Distance

1. Only two hops in the triple jump

All the world
Stops breathing
        At the starting line.

Before the train comes,
The eyes have begun to run.
Jumping over the first and the second mountains,
And bumping into the third one,
They suspend in the air, unable to come down.[1]
Looking forwards,   the vast expanse of clouds;
Looking backwards,   Kowloon has taken the train,
                                        Escaping to the border,
Looking me backwards to Taipei,
        To the windows of Taishun Street.

2. Gazing more than thirty years

That old flower-pot seller
Still gazes at the old home,
        Its flowers and soil,
At the opening of the street.
The glass buildings along the streets,
            Open rows of rows of
            Bright nostalgia.
In the giant shadows of the buildings
His childhood is seated under the big banyan tree.

One Wild-Wolf motorcycle imported from Japan
At the sharp speed of samurai sword
Stabs from Peace East Road down into
                    Peace West Road.
Across memory.
A torrent of panic.
All the land fell to the blood.
Aren't what are mistier than the splashed ink

His bitter, tearful eyes?
Seeing the bullet traces on the body
Running the rivers over here.
The wind chilling, the water freezing;
The leaves falling, the branches bending.
On the highway popped up by the machine guns,
On the flyover arched above by the bombs,
Every direction has ever cried.
The doorway of heaven
Is the wound not healed for long.
Gazing at the eyes which have been gazing
More than thirty years,
His tired eyesight
Can only drag back home
The old cattle in the dusky rice field,
Unable to move the scenery of the prosperous streets.
One western-styled baby buggy
Pushes new ages by.
A row of skyscrapers stand in
The resounding noise of laying the foundation pillars.
He wakes up from the explosion of the bombs,
Still seeing the deserted baby, unable to hold the milk bottle,
sitting in the ruins of scattered bombshells.[2]
The whole sky in the smoke
Fails to reveal its blueness.

When the Wranglers
Blue the whole street,
A group of people go to the church
To look at Virgin Mary;
A group of people throng into the department store
To look at times and seasons.
He no longer thinks much of this.
Seeing the Roman tiles,
He asks about the slab roads.
Seeing the Sunkist,
He asks about the well water.
Seeing the newly fashioned attires,
He asks about Mother's face aging in the wind and rain.

The sirens in the whole street
Call forth chirping and whistling.
He desires to fly, to jump.
Tens of flower pots, looking here and there,
Facing the sky,
Want him to sit down quietly.

Sitting until dark,
His hampered legs
Turn themselves to the foot-washing basin,
Taking him back to the water-playing childhood
In the little pool.
Being happy, water beads splashed on the face and
Laugh to become tears.
Tears are stars.
The star sky at home town
Shines on the TV screen
And looks at him.

When groups of stars twinkle,
How could they turn out to be singing stars?
(The earth rolls against the direction of the bombs.)
Phoenix eyes of Phoenix Sister
Are the laughing diamond bulbs
Coming down from the grand hotel
Of a ten-plus-story building.
His eyes darkened in the corner
Are the vegetable oil lamps.
Before sleep,
The young man takes out the blueprint used in 007
To look at tomorrow,
To calculate tomorrow with the computer.
The night always requires him to sit in the bruise of memory
To see time deposited in the bankbook and the calendar
Shrinking bit by bit.
Never hearing of a literary good-night,
He embraces the single bed to sleep.

Sleep until one day he won't wake up;
But the sun still rises.
Clocks and watches stop;
Roads still walk.
As to whether there are still gunshots,
Whether the Security Council has to call for a meeting,
The newspaper will speak at the right moments.
So long as the earth still exists,
The barbed wire still exists,
The day and night still exist,
The white milk powder and the black ammunition
Will always exist.

3. A line through the pupils of God

This line from Panmunjom
Circling East-West Germany Corridor
Arrives here,
Farther than where the clouds go,
Nearer than the feet and the earth.

Once the eyes touch it,
The sky will return home.
Once the line gazes into the horizon,
God will think of home too.

Who throws down this line
On the ground?
Along it,
Mother, where is your hand that held the stitching needle?
Where is my childhood that snapped away with the kite?
Mother, if this line
Had seamed the wound of the earth,
I would have taken that train,
Along the painful lines on your forehead,
Back to the days without gunshots
To see you.

If this line
Is a brush stroke,
Activated to the movement of Yangtze River,
Calmed down to the stillness of the Great Wall,
All those ice mountains and ice waters
Frozen in memory and the refrigerator
Will flow back to the great mountains and the great rivers,
And flush away all the barbed wire and bombshells.
Mother country, you will swim here in the sunshine of the south
And ski away in the snow of the north.
Then, open the great tea table of the green field,
Hold the big china teapot of the blue sky,
Stay not in the small teahouse,
Drinking from “**The Yellow River flows on into the sea**”
To “**The distant shape of the lonely sail melts into the hollow blue**”;
Drinking from “**The moon rushes into the flux of the Great River**”
To the “**The boat crosses alone in the wild unmanned ferry.**”
Let the cameras from Paris, London, and New York
Come in to be filled with top nature scenery and culture and return.
Let T’ang Dynasty come back to say:
That is the longest, the most beautiful
Bloom of Orient.

Mother country,   when the city has exhausted itself for six days
                              And thought of the scenery of the Sunday outskirts,
The birds speak to the airplane in the sky:
The lofty Empire Building
        Will never be higher than you.
                The leisurely South Mountain
Allows aerospace chairs
                To lay in the great void.
Mother country,   you are still on earth.
                              The biggest armchair.
Only if time and seasons enter
To open T'ang poetry and Sung *Ci*poetry
And no gunshots make noise,
The world will retreat
        Into the mountain colors that change between being and nonbeing.
How long will the spaceship take
                                        To arrive?
Unable to arrive,
I can only look into the mind.
Throwing more gazes,
Why do I look back at this line again?
It's the train heading for the border
                            Brings back again
Compartments of nostalgia.

After the train is gone,
Even the land has forgotten
Where it should get on and off the train.
The whole track
Lashes the sky,
Resounding
        Fits of pain.

Postscript:

In 1984, I was invited by Prof. Hwang Te-wei to give a speech at the University of Hong Kong. Once, after meals, I stood together with the poet Yu Kwang-chung on the heights of the dormitory at Chinese University of Hong Kong and viewed Canton-Kowloon Railway from a distance. I was much stirred, recalling the time spent in "bomb sounds" and "nostalgia," the war sufferings faced by human beings, the insistence of the bullets and the bayonets piercing through human bodies to explore and prove the meaning of existence. . . . In this fixed tragedy, God can only heal the wounds of human beings with the prayers of His churches. When the bullets spread seeds on earth and faces, no matter which hand is used to reap victory, the other hand has to hold human blood. However, for the sake of freedom, humanity, and existence, man cannot but confront himself with wars. On the sides of barbed wire are both the restless hatred until death and the natural love between mothers and sons that are firmly connected by "breasts" and "mouths." Thinking of the embittered emotions that have long been "stuck" by hardships, can't we feel anything when we see the faces of the last generation stepping on the bombshells to emerge from the gunfire and miserable memory and the faces of the young generation wearing happiness and laughter to emerge from the bright urbane civilization? No one will not feel in his innermost being the latent pain and anguish especially when he knows that the national grand scenery and the profound cultural potential are indeed the perfect cradle for felicitous life and yet, the barbed wire, bullets, and different flags and uniforms still cause a depressing distance between reality and ideal . . . .

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[1] "It's because the third mountain is covered by the barbed wire of Mainland China." (Luo Men's note)

[2] "The famous war-time reporter-photographer Wang Xiaoting once took the picture of the diserted baby in the ruins and won an international award." (Luo Men's note)

(Cited in Chapter Three)

Chen Kehua

Portrait of Ladies

He thinks,
"She is too obviously a lie."

Prologue: Women of Taipei

Putting an end to my erotic imagination of the whole street, I want to sleep.
Oh, the country no longer for poetry—
The literary Taipei. Women of Taipei.
A queerly evolved species, a group of aliens whose attempts are unknown,
Are stealing into the old dragon race. Here and there
They deform
The original highly-displayed
Totem of the dragon—
It may as well be   the carelessness of God,
An experiment before consciousness and reason crumble—
Traditional figure paintings in history deliberately remain
A blank in the brain centers of women: the constant fluidity of will
Can dominate by no means
The tenderness of hair and the coquetry of lips.
Although I am always used to believing,
                                        To forgiving,
                                        To being enchanted,
As an emptied pocket
Embarrassingly hanging—
When I walk alone in the primitive and waste Taipei,
Complacently
Like an impotent snake.

Tired of being further entangled with the trees of clustering fruits,
Every night, I am awakened by the shaking intercourse of the great earth.
Then, I recall the familiar, wet,
Maternal nostalgia—
The ascetic bed,
Or even the neatly folded quilt, never keeps
The frequently pressed trace of dream—Taipei of no dream. Women of Taipei.
No more silent struggling with the yellow dirt.
No more holding stone and wood in mouth to fill the sea.
Taipei of traffic jam and choked flooding, of fairy tales in vogue now—
So, they more innocently believe in Snow White

And her seven men
(And every one of them is a dwarf of emotion).

And nothing to look up, except the self's own
Breasts piercing upwardsto the sky—Taipei of a basin.
Women of Taipei. An imperceptible decaying odor
Imbues the deliberately exposed chest.
Often I lift the key, so molded and so stubborn,
To probe which door can be opened—
Numerous hearts confined in the iron grille and the stockade
Feed the baby animals lacking in sunshine and love,
Desperately and repeatedly
Gnawing desire.
But once she opened her eyes for the first time—
In the rustling pursuit of knowledge and love affairs of Taipei, an instinctive obstinacy
(A multiple equation of heredity and environmental variables),
When she opened her eyes for the first time like a fledgling—the thing that she called
Complex
—Maria held up the man released from the cross—
Suddenly exploded in the deep layer of light.
She embraced breathlessly and endlessly a full body of affection.
She loved.

The forgotten Taipei.
The mingled smells of pheromones curl upward.
The twenty-first century's cooking smokes becloud chastity
And the obscure expressions of disloyalty; we have learned in time to break the
whole
Into pieces to pay; every day lasts for
The burning of a cigarette. Taipei of disposal.
Women of Taipei. I always think of tearing away
The labels on the backs of women: when throwing down the beautiful baits,
They are always the splashing,
Glistening carps,
Luxuriating in the frequent touches between the bladders and fins. . . .

And I always lie down remorselessly for sleep,
Taking a great amount of laxative of thought
And sleeping pills of knowledge—
About nostalgia, and the nightmare of 1984.
I have stopped the repetitious anatomy of the bodies, dead from the same disease—
The lengthy pathological report which none will open and read, oh.
Every night I enjoy the artificial immaculate
Sleep in the metal womb. I find
I am not lonely,
Because what sleeps with me

Is all of China's
Solitude.

A Woman Who Delivers Newspapers

I always wake up as such. When the newspaper
Enfolding a slice of morning color flies over the balcony,
Hitting the crisp window, a sound suddenly
Stops.
The period of dream.

(But my dream mingled with reality is so long.)

That is all what I can meet, a middle-aged, philistine woman:
Receiving consolation from the illiterate church,
Praying in front of a leftover cafe,
Pulling a cart of red tea to refill men's sweat—
And adeptly swinging that pair of
Precocious, overworking, and early drooping buttocks.

(Today, she wears a raincoat.
She makes a bun with something in mind.
Yes, she even tries
To timidly greet me . . . . Oh, is she also self-conscious of humbleness?)

And me. I am stingy with my smile.
(Humph! She looks as if she still dreamed as a seventeen-year-old girl.)
I stoop to pick up the scattered compassion in the human world;
My hands support the icy glass frame of knowledge.
I say: good morning. Stuff the cross you worship
Into the bleeding lower part of your body.

(God doesn't know what the operation of menstrual regulation is.)

In the early morning, the tick-tack of her bicycle dims away,
House by house, passing each heavily locked dreamland
(The city exposes in sleep its primeval hardness
And parsimonious paleness)
And the overlapped fatigue of hot limbs
Deeply wrapped up in the quilt—the whitish bellies of the fishes with rotting smell.
Oh, the everlasting sameness of the desperate dawn,
Like the piled smudges and grease of days,
Cannot be cleaned up.

Memory falls and breaks, breaks and falls, and is still collected.
—On beds, everyone embraces himself,

Embracing a ticklish tomorrow,
A tad unresponsive to love-making,
Flinching and retreating, retreating and flinching—if having a dream when it breaks,

She is always the first to get up.

A Hooker

Walking in Ximen Ding, always feeling the need to embrace something
Or
To be embraced by something, tightly.

(But I never feel lonely;
I am a kind of drug.)
Even if the summer drips Coca-Cola-like
Black saliva,
Even if love is almost extinct, in Ximen Ding trapped in passion.

To be embraced is always good
Even by one's own shadow.

Even by hunger.

A Mistress

In waiting she stands there to become a poem.
Man's watery gaze
Has not yet wetted her; her soul withers,
Unable to foreground itself from a trance.
—If the door of the elevator opens, at this moment,
A bunch of roses will stab into her gauzy breast.
—Oh, so attentive to her own beauty and sorrow,
Because
This is her profession.

(Sunday. Every day is like Sunday.)
How wonderful. She thinks: except
Sunday service. The morning still like a young girl,
Because of too many social calls during the night dreams,
Wakes up unpleasantly:
Sunday again. All heart-rending
And rainy and appointment-broken Sundays:
She just came back from church,
And met a group of the most innocent Satans—they scratched one another's itching.
Sin gets entwined in the bodies, as the stubborn tinea

In the synchronous saliva of citing the psalm
Quickly spreads loneliness.
"And when scratching the itching becomes a comfy habit . . . . Oh,
Amen." She yawns,
Finding a hand in the mirror to massage her neck:
You just took a shower?

(How many times do we make love a week?)
Yes. She always looks like just taking a shower.
She is like a bob-haired girl student,
Like his daughter,
Like his mother in the picture. He thinks:
"She is too obviously a lie."

And he is nothing but a man,
Always believing in beauty—She steps onto the balcony,
Her hands basking on the balustrade, letting the wind slowly dry
Her ten desire-seething nail-polish in scarlets.
Oh, the night wind from the depth of the epoch, silently from behind,
Plucks down her dangling bra,
As if an over-dexterous giant hand tremblingly unveiled
The whole nihilistic Taipei.

The Story of the Twin Laborer Girls

Always seeing the ugly face of the self, they hideously
Try to tear the other away,
Suspecting that the other is only
A repulsive mirror—thus reminded of the ecstasy of shattering.

They no longer believed in the mirror since eight years of age.
All the time when their limbs belonged to the self, on the road after work,
They grasped and pulled down the other's locks and locks of
Hair reaching to the knees—
But assembling electronic parts had been their only game—
A kind of poignant pleasure in the pain of uprooting the hair
They knew
And were addicted to it.

They self-talked to each other,
As if developing their private language system,
Like ants' antennae, bees' dancing,
Accurately pointing to a new stamen in bloom
(A young technician to their liking)
And a water bottle with the stamen full of honey juice.

So they sucked each other's tits, and laughed.
But they had only one scripture of menstruation. In the entire zone of export
processing,
Thousands of gray and dusty flowers
At the same night, only when the soft physiological pain came,
Had fresh and blazing fluid flowing through
Their withered and cracked ditches—after the moon flowed away,
They also discarded the period.

The Man says that he can not distinguish her from her.
On the Hualian seashore, the unmarried mothers take a walk on the pier at six sharp.
The weak rising sun in December is like
Her youngest belly.
The becoming of round shape demands trying pains—
For the first time, she feels being a woman,
The agony sufficient to weigh down the spine in woman's life;
With the same fate of Maria, she believes
This is "immaculate conception"—

At the same time floating in the culvert of the city
Are the jades and tiles, rejected by the world,
And her sister:
On the anatomy table surrounded by taboos
The medical students in the laboratory class,
Because of finding a misshapen and ruptured womb,
Burst out a metal-sharp joyous exclamation . . . .

Oh, one mirror, like
A life,   lives in two bodies at the same time.
Now she believes
She and her sister are the same human.
She sheds tears and believes this myth—one human.
Now, it is she
And the baby in her belly.

(Cited in Chapter Four)

Feng Qing

The Actress

At that time, the downpour becomes serious.
The director orders a close-up running after the beauty on the beach
To face your profile of suffering with artistic creation.
If panned wide, the shot can still catch
The rushing surf in the mind
And the whimpering she-oak played by the gale.

I think the more proper explanation is pain.
We have to shorten the time for love to spare it for life.
If the shot cuts into his low-temperature pupils,
It will discover how pain intimately pierces our soul.
Reflected in the deep eyelids is
The image of the pond haunting every night.
Even touched by hands
The chilly snow white would not seem to be
A rain-damped long letter.
"No,   we all have experienced
The similar plot and story.
After that accident,
I again understand
That love needs energy.
Dear,
No matter who we are,
We are actually like others.
I think the more proper way is to control pain,
Not feeling anxious."
This is a customary theme,
Used to deduce our non-dramatic moments.
The director once again emphasizes
This is the limit.
As a starting point of the focus of beauty,
You have to look at her eyes.
He will ask about *your* name.
In a way contrast with a Platonic expression,
He will repeat:
"May I have *your* name?"
At that time, the gunnel of *your* soul
Will be boarded with the white birds of carnal desire and happiness
To create the perfect illusion.
The director once again emphasizes

It should be like a representation of a simulated experience.

Deep in your mind
You repeatedly repel the conflict between passion and reality.
The pain and uncanniness are inexplicable in the script.
You will stealthily sneak out of the frame and people
To converse with your soul,
As if seeking for the billow under nature's strike years ago.
Thus the stories ten years ago and ten years since then
Again in the same attire
Flee into absolute nihilism.
Moving around the future topic,
You are required to wear the costume
To wander through the stifling spotlights.
(I miss you so much,
I miss you so much,
I unashamedly desire
The ancient privilege and passionate memory.)

At that time, you will empty out all the life
To finish shooting the rainy season of the harbor city before the typhoon attacks.
Pictures of regret and grief are overlaid.
Before the actress kills herself,
The man has to drink up the bottle.
The prosperous love is holding together an umbrella in the dark street.
The image is our feeling no warmth at all on the cold bed.
This is an age that false talent will beat false virtue.
You will again force yourself to be naked
To record a complete fraud in creation.
The director again demonstrates the same embrace and love-making.
The billow surges.
The sad rain keeps falling.
We have to roll in the mud.
Like a hunting game,
Every shooting fails to stab the right spot.
The director yells.
You should memorize and transmit
The pollen of intimacy.

Look at the camera   and then cry
"Dear,
May I have *your* name?"
Your tears are not in the script
But banished a thousand miles away.
Dear,
The function of rain is to connect
The cold, affectionate dialogue and the undercurrent line.

Let those who share
Stay with us,
Living by the frequency of imagination and tacit agreement.
You have to collect all the diffuse chloroform.
You have to . . . listen . . . .
The premise he sets at the other end of the telephone is
We all have to think in a positive way!
Look at the camera. Soundless whimper is not in the script.
In the downpour, he will thoroughly comprehend nothing.
Afterwards,
The heavy rain will fill to the brim
The deserted dock.
Someone walks through the dark corridor exclusively reserved for sentimental plots
Only to interpret some slight, regretful self-dizziness.
The camera tilts right and left, right and left.
"This is a dangerous rainy season!"
The director bites his pipe,
And with the whiskers wetted by rain beads orders to give up.
After working all night,
No need to sleep. The clever cleanness can be maintained
Even without bath.

The actress still in the classical, long skirt
Solely walks toward the harbor in twilight.
Every artistic creation,
Including love,
Comes close to the nerves.
And events of love take too many words.
Between realistic desperation and embellishment of the script,
We cannot find the straight, exquisite road.
Everyone memorizes dutifully
The faultless stereotyped lines.

The actress' sense of melancholy is permeating.
The drizzle fills the sky.
The dotted line wrought by love
Extends.
This long shot needs no editing.
Inaudible are
The actress' real soliloquy and glistening tears
Before she wades into the water.

Appendix II:
The Selected Chinese Poems

(Cited in Chapter One)

洛夫

非政治性的圖騰——謁中山先生故居

廣東中山縣翠亨村是近代中國人心靈上的神話，但當你親身面對它時，卻又感到歷史的蒼茫和現實的酸楚，逼人而來。

八月上旬，我以朝聖的心情初謁了翠亨村國父的故居，在兩個小時的盤桓中，內心的感受極爲強烈而複雜，當時適逢風雷驟發，大雨滂沱，驚心動魄中，又回想起發生不久的六四天安門事件，頓時感到現實與歷史，個人與時代，一代偉人與中國命運等各種情結交錯糾纏所迸發的意象，在胸中激盪互撞不已，於是便有了這首「非政治性的圖騰」的胚胎，而構句成篇卻是返台半個月以後的事。

近年來，兩岸的中國人都掌握了創造歷史的契機，詩人雖非歷史的創造者，卻不能沒有爲歷史作證的使命意識。這首觀照歷史與現實、揉合個人情感與反思的小型抒情史詩，正是我在這方面所提供的系列作品之一。

1

追趕一頂被大風吹走的帽子
我倉倉皇皇地
闖進了
一部未設防的歷史

2

比小學課本裡的翠亨村
多了一些
複製品的風景
一些
會講普通話的雀鳥

和善的天空
從它最藍的高處
我彷彿看到一縷孤煙升起，且
漸漸形成一個巨大的漩渦
想不起有甚麼可疑之處
只知道這部歷史中的若干章節
以往碰都不敢碰
一碰就怕書中的鉛字全部崩落
於今我卻站在心臟地帶
將它的童年、青年、中年、老年
血系，年表，族譜，歲月的種種切切
一塊兒讀
有意思極了
膜拜混雜著觀光的心情
一面走一面頻頻搔首
除了研製炸彈，共和國，和玫瑰（註一）
我們從一位革命家那裡還能學些甚麼？
一顆炸彈
與
另一顆炸彈
久久瞠目而視
一個 Requblic
與
另一個 Requblic
默默相對無言
而中間的玫瑰除了發出愛的電波
還能說些甚麼？
橫跨兩岸的腳除了試探水溫
還能做些甚麼？
其實做與不做
明天的太陽和老人班照樣爬上額頭
其實這時
我們已來到了紀念館的大門
年輕的收票員指著
那個簡化了四十年的「孫」字說：
這是無害的
非政治性的圖騰
人民幣更是百無禁忌
便這樣，五毛錢
買了半個下午的蒼茫

3

（進入紀念館之前
我喫著一隻紅色的蕃石榴
核兒哽在喉嚨要我暫時沉默）

館長的歡迎詞
比接待室的椅子熱多了
空調調得不左不右
剛好叫人想起
一行遺留在天安門廣場上的詩
惴惴然，我淺啜一口熱茶
生怕
瓷杯突然在胃裡爆炸
「天氣真好啊！」館長說
我想起的卻是那些凶年
洪水起義，蝗蟲革命
一場大雪留下宇宙性的空白・想起
慈禧太后長長指甲裡的藏垢
王公大臣髮辮上爬行的蝨子
八國聯軍統帥的鬍子裡點著一根雪茄
北京城就再也見不到炊煙
李鴻章有一口大號痰盂
毛澤東有一口中號痰盂
鄧小平有一口小號痰盂
頓然覺得喉嚨好癢
環顧四周，先生，你說
我胸中這口瘀血
該吐在中國的哪塊土地上？
看看窗外
鳥聲仍是當年的啁啾
河水仍是當年的蜿蜒
石頭仍是當年的癡愚
腳踏車仍是當年的滿身銹味
立秋還早得很
而樹葉已開始三言兩語地
作多角度的飄零
一片堪堪從我臉頰擦過
有點痛，卻也無從追究
枝上懸著安靜的果子

如我反思的頭
在垂聽
歷史沉落的回聲

4

近幾百年來
我們的國民睡著了
我們　睡　著　了
因爲
我們　睡著了　所以
文明退步
政治墮落
我們　睡
著
了
　　　睡
　　　　　　著
　　　　　　　　　了……

錄音機咔嗒一聲，我們睡著了的頭顱從先生鋼釘般的廣東官話中瞿然驚醒，從一九二四年的前一年的前一年的陣痛中驚醒（註二）；從南方傳來的震天撼地的鼙鼓聲中驚醒，從鴉片煙榻的崩潰聲中，從辮子那樣又長又黑的噩夢中，從亂七八糟胡說八道死不要臉罪該萬死的他媽的喪權辱國的各種混蛋條約的細綁中，從辛亥那年武昌城樓第一聲槍響中，從蘆溝橋下一襲灰衣的飄落中，從日軍大砲的頻頻呼吸中，從嗜血的荊棘中，從離亂人悽惶的腳步聲中，從貪瀆自私的右手與殘酷鬥爭的左手猛然撞擊所迸發的血光中，從藏著一大包古柯鹼的毛語錄中，從泡沫般眾多的謊言中，從學生們的絕命書中，從坦克車壓過廣場的隆隆聲中
從翠亨村午後沉鬱的雷聲中
驚醒

5

六月受的傷
七月還在痛
八月他們才知道某些花是摘不得的
我再次搔搔腦袋
抓了一掌的頭皮屑
一掌心事的化石

便這樣
尾隨主人進入了他的故居
疑似神話
卻有它最爲雄辯的真實
最爲執拗的本質
院子的右側
有一株先生手植的酸子樹（註三）
樹酸花不酸，據說還可以泡茶
只是隨開隨謝
亦如中國地平線上初升起的太陽
某年一場雷雨之後
樹幹折了腰，駝了背
原本廣被數十萬平方公里的濃蔭
於今覆不及丈
這裡不見石獅踞守
卻可聽到那口老井對空嘶吼
有人驚醒，有人蒙被大睡

我搔著頭皮，繼續閱讀
下一頁
翻到了灰塵細說卑微的年代
一隻鬧鐘
埋怨世人太吵的年代
我順著主人的手指望去：
一鍋　　凍結的沸騰
一灶　　冷卻的燃燒
一碗　　風乾的眼淚
一杓　　千年寒泉提煉的堅貞
一椅　　莊嚴而憂傷的沉思
一床　　夜夜被劍嘯驚起的英雄夢
我又隨他進入了書房
深入
那些用火思考的歲月
三更，他危坐如一冷肅的孤峰
上下求索，搜尋
一把犀利的手術刀
五更披衣而起，負手
繞室。苦思著
一項非鐵血所能完成的變天計畫
他期待風暴
如期待晨曦

他在爲沒有褲子的民族
鑄造一個鋼質的魂魄
爲瘦弱而腎虧的明天
注入蛋白質的曙光

一室啞默
一室待發的風雷
我強忍住一個噴嚏，看他
滿臉激情地從書桌旁砰然站起
震得兩肩的積塵
紛紛而落
他黯然無言
輕撫著桌上雜陳的遺物——
一個地球儀　世界猶在他掌中飛旋
一具聽診器　他早就聽到中國不規則的心跳
一盞煤油燈　長夜堅持的一朵冷焰
一支毛筆　李鴻章啊，興亡大事且聽我說（註四）

6

先生的話語
停了又說
壁上的灰塵
積了又落
時間的臉孔
髒了又洗
地心的火種
死了又活

午後三時。我的帽子仍未追回
而翠亨村天空的臉色驟變
一陣夏日的豪雨　沛然
而降。八月不再安靜
豪雨打瓦，打窗
打階前落葉
打井邊蒼苔
打生前身後滿屋子的悲情
雨水洗淨夏日的慾念，沖去了
讀史人零亂的腳印
也暴露了泥濘下更深的傷口

撐一把破傘
我衝出了冷溼的歷史
仰首向天
迷茫中隱約看到
雲端一條閹割了的來龍
卻不見雨中獨行者的去脈

註：

一：中山先生故居二樓走廊上陳列有當年密謀革命時研製炸藥的機具。

二：中山先生這篇講演係於一九二四年應上海中國晚報記者之邀所發表的局部內容，原講詞長達一時四十五分鐘，最初製成留聲機唱片，爲日人宮尾先生所藏。

三：這棵先生手植的樹，早年遭雷雨摧折後即横躺在地，枝葉斜長，開花如故，初看猶如一巨型盆景，蔚爲奇觀。

四：據故居管理員說，這支毛筆曾是先生當年草擬上李鴻章書用過的遺物。

一九八九・八・廿九

(Cited in Chapter Two)

羅門

時空奏鳴曲——遙望廣九鐵路

（一）只能跳兩跳的三級跳

整個世界
停止呼吸
　在起跑線上

車還沒有來
眼睛已先跑
跳過第一第二座山
到了第三座
懸空下不來（註一）
往前　茫茫雲天
回頭　九龍已坐車
　　　　竄入邊境
將我望回臺北市
　泰順街的窗口

（註一）因第三座山罩著大陸的「鐵絲網」。

（二）望了三十多年

那個賣花盆的老人
仍在街口望著老家的
　　　　　　花與土
玻璃大廈沿街
　開著一排排
　亮麗的鄉愁
在建築物龐大的陰影下
他坐來大榕樹下的童年

一輛日本進口的野狼牌機車
以武士刀尖銳的速度
從和平東路直刺入
　　　　和平西路
穿過記憶

一陣驚慌
整塊土地倒在血泊裏
較潑墨還迷濛的山水
不就是他愁苦的淚眼
望著彈痕從身上
　奔過來的江河
　　　風寒水冷
　　　葉落枝垂
在機槍子彈架起的高速公路上
　　　　　炮彈跨空的天橋上
每個方向都哭過
天堂的出入口
一直是久未痊癒的傷口
望著自己三十多年來
仍一直望著的眼睛
他疲累的視線
只能把黃昏田裏那頭老牛
　　　　　　　　拖回家
已牽不動日漸繁華的街景
一輛西式嬰兒車
推著新的歲月經過
一排高樓聳立在
　打椿的巨響裏
他從炸彈聲中醒來
仍看見那個抓不到乳瓶的棄嬰
　　　坐在彈片散落的廢墟上（註二）
整座天空在煙火中
　　　　藍不出來

當藍哥兒將整條街
　　　　　藍過來
一群人走進禮拜堂
　　　　去看聖母
一群人湧進百貨公司
　　　　　去看歲月
他已想不到那麼多
見到羅馬磁磚
　便問石板路
見到香吉士
　便問井水
見到新上市的時裝

　便問母親在風雨中老去的臉
滿街汽笛
響來鳥聲與口哨
他好想飛想跳
幾十個東張西望的花盆
　　朝著天空
要他一起靜靜坐下來

坐到天黑
他行動不便的雙腿
才交給那隻洗腳盆
　帶回童時愛玩水的
　　　　　小池塘裏
一高興　濺在臉上的小水珠
　　　　　　　　都笑成淚
淚是星星
家鄉的星空
便亮到電視機的螢光幕上
　　　　　　　　來看他

群星閃動時
怎會是一群歌星
（地球朝炸彈的反方向滾）
鳳姊姊的鳳眼
　是沿著豪華大飯店
　十多層高的樓房
　一直笑下來的鑽石燈
他的雙目是暗在牆角裏的
　　　　　　　　菜油燈
臨睡前
年輕人拿出００７裏的建築圖
　　　　　　　　　看看明天
　　　　　　用電腦算算明天
夜總是要他坐在記憶的傷口裏
　去看儲存在存摺與日曆牌上
　　　　　那越來越少的歲月
從沒有聽過一聲文學性的晚安
　　　便抱著那張單人床睡去

睡到有一天醒不來
太陽仍會起來

鐘錶停了
路自己也會走
至於槍聲還會不會響
安全理事會還要不要開
到時候報紙會說
只要地球還在
鐵絲網還在
白晝與黑夜還在
白色的乳粉與黑色的彈藥
　　　　　　　　都會在

（註二）戰地記者名攝影家王小亭，以拍攝炸後廢墟上的棄嬰，獲國際名攝影獎。

（三）穿過上帝瞳孔的一條線

這條線
從板門店
繞東西德走廊
來到這裏
較雲去的地方遠
卻比腳與泥土近

只要眼睛
碰它一下
天空都要回家
這條線望入水平線時
連上帝也會想家

是誰丟這條線
　　　在地上
沿著它
母親　妳握縫衣針的手呢
還有我斷落在風箏裏的童年
母親　如果這條線
已縫好土地的傷口
我早坐上剛開出的那班車
沿著你額上痛苦的紋路
　回到沒有槍聲的日子
　　　　　　　去看妳
如果這條線

　是一筆描
動便長江萬里
靜便萬里長城
那些凍結在記憶與冰箱裏的
　　　　　　　　冰山冰水
都流回大山大水
把鐵絲網與彈片全沖掉
祖國　你便泳著江南的陽光來
　　　　　滑著北地的雪原去
然後　打開綠野的大茶桌
　　　捧著藍天的大瓷壺
　　　不在那小小的茶藝館裏
從「黃河入海流」
飲到「孤帆遠影碧空盡」
從「月湧大江流」
飲到「野渡無人舟自橫」
讓從巴黎倫敦與紐約
　　　進來的照相機
都裝滿第一流的山水與文化回去
讓唐朝再回來說
那是開得最久最美的
　　　　　一朵東方

祖國　當六天勞累的都市
　　　已想到週日郊外的風景
鳥便在天空裏對飛機說
巍然的帝國大廈
　永遠高不過你
　　悠然的南山
任使一張張太空椅
　　　往太空裏放
祖國　你仍是放在地球上
　　　最大的那張安樂椅
只要歲月坐進來
打開唐詩宋詞
沒有槍聲來吵
世界便遠到
　山色有無中
太空船真不知要開多久
　　　　　　才能到了
到不了

只好往心裏望
多望幾眼
怎麼又望回這條線上來
原來是開入邊境的火車
又把一車箱一車箱的鄉愁
　　　　　　　　運回來

車走後
連土地都忘了
在那裏上下車
整條鐵軌
鞭過天空
聲聲回響
　陣陣痛

後記：七十三年應港大黃德偉教授邀請赴港大演講，曾同詩人余光中於餐後站在中文大學宿舍高處，遙望廣九鐵路，感慨頗多，想起在「炮聲」與「鄉愁」中渡過的年代；想起全人類共同面對戰爭的苦難：想起子彈與刺刀，一直要穿過人體去探索與證實生命存在的意義……這種悲劇已形成的事實，神與上帝也只能用祂禮拜堂中的「禱告」，來治療人類的傷口了。當子彈播種在土地與人的臉上，隨便用那一隻手去收割勝利，另一隻手就必須去握住人的血，可是爲了自由、人道與生存，人又無法不去面對戰爭，在鐵絲網的兩邊，有著死不兩立的恨，也有純粹是「乳房」與「嘴」緊緊相連的母子之愛……這種一直被「卡」在難境中的苦情，使我們看到上一代踏著彈片從炮火與苦憶中伸出來的臉，與年輕一代帶著幸福與笑聲從燦爛的都市文明中昇起的臉，能不有所感懷？尤其是國家壯麗的大自然景觀與深厚的文化潛力，都的確是創造國人幸福美好生活的理想溫床，然而由於鐵絲網、槍彈以及不同的旗面與制服，使一切都與理想有了一段痛苦的距離……任誰都會在內心的深處，感知到這種潛在的隱痛與憂慮。

——民國七十三年八月

(Cited in Chapter Three)

陳克華

列女傳

他想：「
她是一則太過明顯的謊言。」

楔子：臺北的女人

結束起對一條街的意淫，我想睡去了
這已不再能詩的國度呵——
文學的臺北。臺北的女人。
一種奇異進化的生物，一群企圖不明的外星人
正混入古老的龍族，這裏一點點
那裏一點點地塗改
原先高展的
龍的圖騰——
無寧說是　神的無心
神智崩潰前的一次實驗罷——
歷史的傳統人物畫裏刻意
留白在女人的腦袋中央：不時流動的意志
怎也管轄不著
髮的溫柔與唇的嬌嗔，
雖然我總是太習慣地去相信
　　　　　　　　　去原宥
　　　　　　　　　去迷戀
如一只被淘空的口袋
尷尬地垂掛——
當我獨自行走洪荒的臺北
施施然如一尾
陽萎的蛇

倦於再去纏結已經纍纍的果樹。
每夜，我總被大地交媾的動盪驚醒
遂憶起熟悉的、濕濡濡的
母性的鄉愁來——
禁慾的眠床
甚或稜角整肅的被褥，也未曾留有

輾轉壓過的夢痕——無夢的臺北。臺北的女人。
不再靜靜博著黃土了
不再啣著木石塡海了
塞車於淤水的臺北，現在是童話信仰的大流行——
因此她們更加童稚地相信白雪公主
和她的七個男人
（而且個個是情感的侏儒）

而且什麼也無法仰望，除了自己
那對刺向天空的乳峰——盆地的臺北。
臺北的女人。有一種不易覺察的腐味
充斥於刻意敞露的胸臆
我總是拎著已經打造成型
頑固的鑰匙去試探，開與不開的門扉——
無數被重重鐵窗和柵欄圍起的心房
豢養著缺乏陽光與愛的幼獸
絕望地重複
啃食慾望
然而，曾經她第一次睜眼——
在碌碌於知識與愛戀的臺北，一種本能的執著
（一種遺傳與環境變項的多元方程）
當她雛般第一次睜眼——那被她稱做
某種情意結的東西
——瑪利亞抱起從十字架上卸下的男人——
陡地在光的深層引爆
她緊摟著一身的感動久久不能自已。
她愛。

遺忘的臺北。
氣味混雜的性費洛蒙嬝嬝升起
二十一世紀的炊煙，氤氳了貞潔
以及背叛的表情模糊：我們及早學會了化整
爲零地付出，一天
大約只燃燒一根煙的壽命。用過即棄的臺北。
臺北的女人。我總想偷偷去撕掉
貼在女人背後的商標：當撒下美麗的餌
她們總是水面嘩然躍起的
鮮豔的鯉
在胸鰾與尾鰭的頻頻廝磨中無由歡悅著……

而我總是無悔地睡下

服用大量，思想的瀉藥
和知識的安眠藥——
關於鄉愁，與惡夢的一九八四
我結束了反覆去解剖，那些相同病因的死屍——
冗長而無人翻閱的病理報告呵
每晚我享用人工的無瑕的
金屬子宮內的睡眠，發覺
我並不寂寞
因爲與我共枕
是整個中國的
孤獨。

一位送報的女子

我總是這樣醒來的。當報紙
捲著一片曙色飛過陽臺
打在清脆的窗上，一聲嘎然
而止，
是夢的句點。

（而我揉雜著現實的夢境是如此悠長）

那是我所能遇見，市井的中年女子：
在不認識字的教堂領取慰藉
在隔夜的自助餐廳飯前祈禱
推一車紅茶補充男人的汗液——
而且嫻熟地，擺動那對因爲早衰
過度操作，而提早下墜的臀部

（今天，她是披著雨衣的。
她若有心事地挽起一個髻。
是啊，她還試圖
怯怯地向我招呼……呵，她竟也自覺卑微嚒?）
而我，我吝於施捨微笑。
（哼！她多像還在做夢的十七歲）
我俯身拾起散落在人世的憐憫
手扶知識的冰冷鏡框
我說：妳早。用妳供奉的十字架塞住
妳流血不止的下體罷

（上帝並不懂得什麼月經規則術。）

清晨裏她嗶嗶遠去的腳踏車聲
挨家挨戶地，經過每個重重落鎖的夢境
（城市在睡眠中露出他原始的僵硬
和慳吝的蒼白)
和那些深裹在被窩裏燠熱的
肢體相疊的疲憊——魚肚白略帶腥朽
亙古同樣絕望的黎明呵
一如這堆積起油垢的日子
無法理清

跌碎復跌碎卻仍被收藏的記憶
——在床上，人人與自己相擁
擁抱一具具怕癢的
做愛不甚反應的
退縮復退縮的明天——天亮時如果有夢

她總是最早起床。

落翅仔

走在西門町，感覺總得摟著點什麼
或者
被什麼摟著，緊緊地

（而我是從不會寂寞的，
我是一種藥。）
即是夏日淌著可口可樂般
墨色的口涎
即使愛已近絕跡，在陷入激情的西門町

被摟著總是好的
即使是自己的影子。

即使是饑餓

情婦

在等待裏她站立成一首詩。
男人水溶溶的目光

尙未將她潤濕，她靈魂萎頓
無法從恍惚中凸顯出來
——電梯如果開了，此時
會有一束玫瑰飛刺進她薄紗的胸部
——如此專心於自己的美麗和淒惻呵　她是，
因爲
這是她的職業。

（禮拜天，每一天都像是禮拜天。）
多好。她想：除了
要做禮拜。早晨依舊少女般
因爲太多夜夢的應酬
而不快地醒來：
又是禮拜天。所有令她心碎過的
下雨又失約的禮拜天：
她剛從教堂回來
遇見了一群最無辜的撒旦——他們相互搔癢
罪盤結在身上，像頑抗的癬
在誦詩一致的口沫中
迅速傳染寂寞
「而當搔癢已成爲一種閒適的習慣……啊，
阿門。」她呵欠著
在鏡子裏找出一隻手替她搓摩頸頓：
剛才洗過澡？

（我們一個禮拜做愛幾次？）
是的。她隨時都像洗過澡了。
她像清湯女學生。
她像他女兒。
她像他照片裏的母親。他想：
「她是一則太過明顯的謊言。」

而他只不過是個男人
永遠相信美麗——她登上陽臺
雙手曬在欄杆上，讓風徐徐吹乾
十隻慾望攢動的蔻丹——
從時代深淵吹出的夜風呵，悄悄從身後
摘下她垂墜的胸衣
彷彿一隻過度靈巧的巨手，顫顫地揭開了
一整個虛無主義的臺北

學生女童工的故事

一直就是看到自己的醜貌，她們歹毒地
想要撕去對方，
懷疑對方從來只是
一面討厭的鏡子的存在——從而聯想到擊碎的狂喜。

她們八歲時便不再相信鏡子。
所有肢體屬於自己的時間，在下工的路上
便不斷抓扯下成把成把
彼此及膝的長髮——
而組合電子零件原是她們惟一的遊戲——
髮根拔起的痛楚裏有一種刺激性的快樂，
她們知道
而且上癮

她們彼此自語
彷彿發展一種私有的語系
如工蟻的觸角，蜜蜂的舞蹈
精確指示一蓬新近盛開的雄蕊
（一位年輕緣投的技術工）
以及蕊中蜜汁飽滿的一只水瓶
於是她們相互吸吮著乳頭，笑了。
而她們只有一本月經。整個加工出口區
千萬朵灰撲撲的花朵
同時那一夜，溫柔的生理痛來臨的時候
才有鮮麗液體流過
她們龜裂萎縮的溝渠——明月隨之流去後
她們也同時丟棄了月經。

男人說他分不清楚她和她。
在花蓮海岸，未婚媽媽們六點整開始堤上的散步
十二月虛弱的旭日一如
她最年輕的腹部
圓的成形需要艱苦掙動——
她第一次感覺女人
女人生命中足以壓傷脊椎的憂患；
和瑪利亞相同命運的，她相信
這都叫做「純潔受胎」——

同時在城市地下水道飄浮的
那些同被人間拒絕的璋和瓦

和她妹妹：
躺在禁忌圍繞的解剖檯上
實驗課的醫學生們
因爲發現一具畸裂的子宮
而爆起了金屬一般銳利的歡呼……

一面鏡子啊，如同
一個生命　　同時活在兩副軀體裏。
她現在相信
她，和她妹妹是同一個人。
她流著淚相信這個神話——一個人。
現在，是她
和她肚裏的孩子。

(Cited in Chapter Four)

馮青

女角

當時大雨傾盆已到了嚴重的程度
導演下令在海灘來一次美麗特寫的追逐
以藝術創作來面對你的苦難側影
如果鏡頭拉遠也可以看到
內心激越奔騰的海浪
強風吹奏正在嗚咽的木麻黃

我想更恰當的解釋是痛苦
我們要縮短戀愛的時間好爲生命留餘地
如果鏡頭切入他低溫的眼瞳
必可發現痛苦如何親密的戳透我們的靈魂
映在深幽的眼瞼下是一
夜夜夢魅纏身的潭影
甚至，伸手探摸
不曾想及那細雪冷炙顏色的白
竟是一封被雨淋溼的長信
「不　我們都同樣經歷
略似的情節及故事
在那場事變之後
我再度瞭解
愛是需要能量的
親愛的
不管我們是什麼人
我們和其他人其實都很相像
我想更恰當的是控制痛苦
而非焦慮」
這是一個相沿成習的主題
用來演繹我們非戲劇性的時刻
導演一再強調
這是極限
作爲美的焦距起點
你要注視她的眼睛
他將問妳的芳名
相對於柏拉圖式的表達
他將重複一遍

「請問芳名？」
那時妳靈魂的舷邊
要棲滿肉慾般幸福的白鳥
製造完美的幻覺
導演一再強調
如一種擬似經驗的再現

你卻要在心底
一再排拒那樣慾情和現實的對立
那是劇本無法描述的痛苦和詭異
你將偷偷溜出鏡頭和人群
與自己的靈魂把臂交談
如若尋找多年前自然撞擊下的巨浪
於是
十年前及十年後的故事
一再以相同的衣著
遁入絕對的虛無
旋轉移位於未來的命題
妳要穿著戲服
打令人窒息的燈光下迤邐而過
（我是那樣思念你
我是那樣思念你
我是那樣無恥的需索一項
古老的權利及情慾的回憶)

那時你將掏盡生命底一切
在颱風來擊之前拍完港都的雨季
悔意及憂傷的畫面交疊
女角自殺前
男的要把酒瓶喝光
繁富的愛是在黑暗的街上共撐一把傘
意象是我們感覺不到半絲溫暖在冷冷的床上
這是假才性要戰勝假節操的時代
你要再度強迫自己裸體
在創作中記載一次完整的騙局
導演再度示範同樣的擁抱及作愛
海濤澎湃
悲傷的雨下個不停
我們要在溼漉的雨濘中打滾
如同一場狩獵的遊戲
每次鏡頭都無法一戳得手

導演大聲喝斥
你應牢記及傳遞
一種親密關係的花粉

凝鏡　然後哭泣
「親愛的
請問芳名？」
你的眼淚不在劇中
卻放逐到千里之外
親愛的
雨的功能是連綴
冰冷而感性的對話及伏線
讓那些共有者
和我們儘量在一起
受想像的頻率及默契存活
你要收集所有碎散的迷迭香
你要……聆聽……
他在電話那頭設定的論題是
我們　都要望好處想啊！
凝鏡　無聲的飲泣在劇本裡沒有
在大雨傾盆中他是完全不會知道
爾後
豪雨浸滿
廢棄的船塢
有人走過通俗情節專用的暗廊
只爲了詮釋一些輕微而抱歉的自暈症
鏡頭要左右搖晃　左右搖晃
「這是個危險的雨季！」
導演咬著煙斗
用沾滿雨珠的絡腮鬍下令　放棄
通宵作業後
不需睡眠　不洗澡也能保持
巧妙的乾淨

女角仍穿著古典的長裙
獨自走向微曦的港邊
每一項藝術的創作
包括愛情
都接近痛點
而愛情事件實在太費筆墨
在真實的絕望與劇本的浮誇之間

我們找不到筆直，美妙的道路
每個人都善盡其責的熟記
完美無缺的類型台詞

女角的惘然淡開
細雨滿天
愛情營營的虛線
延長
這是不需剪接的長鏡頭
實在聽不到
女角涉水前
任何一句真正的獨白及
淚光